

Personal Defense Weapons



J. Randall

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**Loompanics Unlimited
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Weapons for Personal Defense

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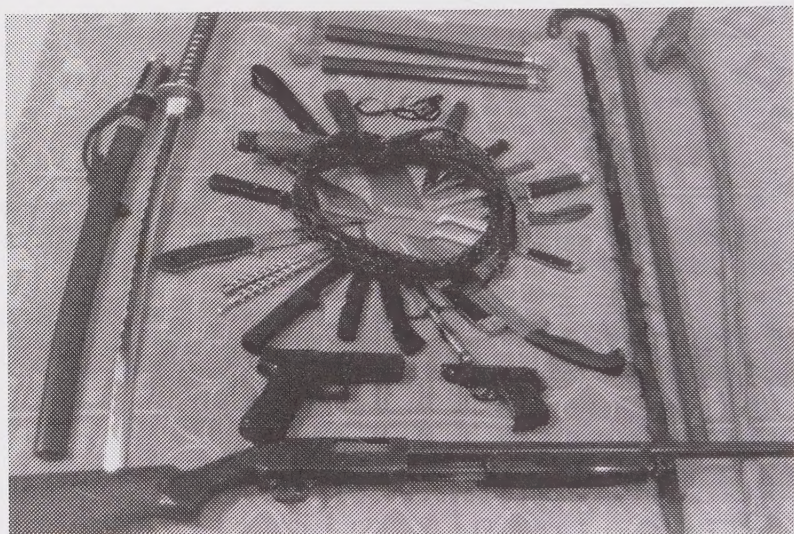
This book is dedicated to my wife and son. May they always be safe from harm. As I tell my son before each of his Tae Kwon Do classes, "Kick ass."

I wish to offer acknowledgements to the many people who have provided me with the information and experience needed to compile this book. This includes both the good guys and the bad guys.

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About the Author

The author of this book is a licensed private investigator and has worked for private, corporate and governmental clients. He has earned both undergraduate and graduate degrees in criminal justice and has served as the administrator of a correctional facility. His work has brought him to some of the most dangerous neighborhoods and confrontations with some of the most violent people. He has been a student of martial arts and of all types of weapons.



An Assortment of Weapons For Personal Defense

A small sample of the infinite realm of personal weapons. With so many possible choices, is there any excuse not to be prepared?

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Section One

Weapons Overview

Chapter 1

History, Evolution and Background

During the time mankind has walked the face of this earth, the use of weapons has been a common practice. During pre-historic cave dwelling days, our ancestors discovered that rocks, clubs and spears were effective tools to defend oneself against predators and with which to obtain food. It took generations for mankind to learn that it was easier to kill a predator and put food on the table with a club or spear than it was with one's bare hands. But once man came to this realization, he never stopped trying to perfect old weapons and invent new ones. The quest for the perfect weapon has never stopped and probably never will. History has clearly demonstrated a human predisposition towards violence. Our quest for the ultimate weapon of destruction is a part of our heritage.

In the days of using bare hands and muscle, man discovered that the throwing of rocks and use of wooden clubs were more effective. When man discovered how to make fires, he not only had a way to better prepare food, but also was able to use fire as a weapon to scare away predators. Basic improvements were continually made with the invention of slings, catapults and sharpened instruments. Rather than throwing a rock with your bare hands, it was considerably more effective and lethal to propel it a longer distance with more power. The discovery of metals and the ability to shape and forge them allowed man to develop a whole new realm of improved weapons. Instead of just sticks and stones, man now had knives, swords, spears and the like.

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This development of offensive and aggressive weapons created a uniquely new need for weapons of defense. This growing need for defensive weapons became a never ending cycle. For every new offensive weapon developed, mankind needed something else to protect himself from it. This included shields to deflect swords and body armor to protect oneself from the danger of the new weapons in use.

In a practical sense, little has changed over thousands of years in our use and development of weapons. For every weapon that man developed, defensive weapons were also created. Armor and shields were created to counter swords, as were bullet proof vests to counter guns. Each generation has seen the introduction of new, improved and more effective weapon systems. This never ending process has continued to the point of absurdity, including anti-missile missiles and counter weapons which are more deadly in design than those from which they were intended to protect us.

This by no means implies that the newest weapons are the best and superior to the old ones. *The one and only criterion which determines the worth and effectiveness of any weapon is that it is capable of doing the job you want it to.* A sword from the days of King Arthur is no less effective against an adversary than a modern day automatic firearm.

During medieval times and in many cultures, the sole purpose of using a sword for a weapon was to kill your adversary. Cutting their head off was an acceptable way of accomplishing this goal. A sword was the perfect tool for this job. In our current society, there is little question as to the social acceptability of cutting off the head of even the most dangerous of adversaries. Although the sword remains effective at doing its intended job, society is no longer tolerant of its use in this fashion. Imagine trying to defend yourself before the police, court and jury after decapitating someone who tried to rob you.

In our modern society there are many types of weapons for personal defense to choose from. There are the old standbys from the past as well as many newer and higher technology choices. Your typical department store carries a wide array of items which qualify as personal

defensive weapons (rest assured that most stores would like to believe that these items are considered as tools and not as weapons). Some of the more common examples would include heavy aluminum police style flashlights, pocket knives and hunting knives, firearms, archery equipment, hatchets, steel capped shoes and more. Any of these items when properly applied can be highly effective and sometimes lethal weapons.

My focus is on those weapons which are of practical value to the average civilian. Persons in the military, police officers and the like, clearly have other resources at their disposal to select and apply weapon systems. Although it is civilians who make up the overwhelming majority of those who are victims of violent crime, our legal system often dictates that civilians remain unarmed and thus unprotected. In an ideal society where there was little chance of being the victim of violent street crime, this would make sense. In recent years it has become obvious that our war on crime and war on drugs have been dismal failures at best. Our law enforcement authorities have been overwhelmed with the ever increasing crime rates which only contribute to the necessity for adequate personal defense. I am not advocating that anyone take the law into their own hands; doing so puts you in peril both legally and physically. *But defending yourself from aggression and harm is an unquestionable right.*

Unfortunately, there is no one perfect weapon for all persons on all occasions. What may be highly effective for one individual may well be totally useless for another. The value of a weapon may also vary from one culture to another. As highly praised and lethally effective was the Samurai sword of feudal Japan, it is obviously quite inadequate when compared to present day firearms.

The mere use of any weapon represents a major risk in itself. The reason you use a weapon is to help defend and protect yourself from danger and to insure your triumph over dangerous adversaries. In an ideal situation, the mere presence of a weapon will scare your adversary away without you having to do anything. In almost all cases in which you use a weapon against another person, you take a risk of legal repercussions for assault at the very least. To make matters even worse, in many cases the mere possession of most weapons is a crime in itself. The choice of an appropriate weapon should

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give you the ability to defend and protect yourself from criminals without making you into a criminal just for possessing or having to use it.

Chapter 2

What is a Weapon?

According to Webster's dictionary, a weapon is: *"an instrument of offensive or defensive combat: something to fight with. A means of contending against another."* By general consensus, a weapon is any tool, device, object or special skill which can be used to inflict physical harm on another or to enable one to defend himself from physical harm from another person.

Almost every imaginable object can fit this definition if used appropriately. With mankind being a creative species, there is probably no item or object which has not been used as a weapon at some time or another. Guns, knives and sticks are some of the more common objects used as weapons, yet many other less obvious objects can be used with equal effectiveness. A toothbrush jabbed in someone's eyes can indeed be considered a lethal weapon when so used. It is more important how the item is used and for what purpose than what it specifically is.

Given the wide variety of circumstances why someone needs to use a weapon, there is an equally wide variety of weapon types to choose from. Whatever the choice of weapon, there are three distinct objectives that the weapon can accomplish: to deter, to injure, or to kill.

There is a certain logic that if you need to select a weapon, you should choose the most effective and powerful one you can find. In a purely theoretical sense this is true, however there are major pitfalls to this logic. Generally speaking, powerful weapons produce powerful results. Less effective weapons produce less effective results

(most of the time). Weapons which are designed primarily to kill are unreliable and risky if a minor injury is all you want to accomplish. A shotgun is a highly effective weapon to stop an assailant but only if used in a lethal manner. A weapon which is designed to produce non-lethal injuries may not produce the desired results on a given subject or may produce more severe and life threatening injuries than intended. Striking someone over the head with a heavy stick can equally have the effect of knocking them out or killing them. The same blow delivered to two different people can often have very different results. One person who is stabbed in the arm may sustain a superficial flesh wound whereas another individual may bleed to death.



Figure 2-1

Martial Arts Kick

Your body can be the most effective, efficient and reliable weapon you can have. It is one of the few things that can be there whenever you want it or need it. The only prerequisite is practice and training. The benefit of this training is more than obvious.

The outcome of any weapon encounter will depend on the type of weapon chosen and how it is used, your level of skill and a large

degree of good luck. Pointing a gun or pulling a knife on a potential assailant will ideally have the effect of scaring them off and deterring them from further violent actions. But if the person is not deterred, you now have to use the weapon against them. Wounding or injuring them is usually sufficient to stop them from further violence. Unfortunately this becomes much more difficult to accomplish than it would seem. Many injuries can easily result in death despite the effort and intent to only make an injury. A stab wound intended only to make a superficial cut can easily result in inflicting more serious harm. It is only on TV that you can safely shoot someone in the arm and be certain that the bullet doesn't deflect off bone and puncture a major organ or artery. Cowboys never bleed to death when shot in the arm, leg or shoulder. Real people often do! TV actors can get hit over the head with a brick and wake up an hour later with only a bump and a headache. Real people can die from such blows!

With proper skill and training, your body can be developed to serve as a very effective weapon (see Figure 2-1). A skilled boxer, wrestler or martial artist can indeed use their body as a very effective and potentially lethal weapon. Many of these skilled individuals can successfully defend themselves against persons wielding knives, clubs or a host of other weapons. The learning and mastery of such fighting skills would seem the ideal choice for a personal weapon, except for a couple of harsh realities and truths. Most people do not have the time, fortitude or stamina to work out and practice often enough to maintain the level of physical proficiency needed. There are martial artists who develop "iron fists" and are capable of breaking bricks with their bare hands. The down side of this is the ongoing pain of practice and resultant injuries. Conditioning your hands or other parts of your body like this is great, providing there is nothing else you want to use them for. Breaking bricks with your fingers and being able to maintain the dexterity to dial a telephone are not always compatible. You can become conditioned to hammer nails with your head, but who would really want to? In the real world, even the best trained fighter can bleed and get knocked out. Hand-to-hand combat loses much of its effectiveness when your opponent is not fighting with his hands. A six foot, two hundred pound black belt in karate stands little chance against a one hundred pound wimp with an automatic rifle.

Chapter 3

Characteristics of Good Weapons

Some of the characteristics of a good weapon are:

- It efficiently does the job it is intended to do.
- It is simple to use and easy to carry.
- It is convenient to have with you whenever and wherever you need it. (Since you never know when and where this is, you need to have it with you always.)
- You have the skill to use it against an adversary and the ability to make sure it is not used against you.
- You won't get a guaranteed jail sentence just for possessing it (whether you use it or not).

As obvious as the above criteria may seem, many people fail to consider these basics, which can lead to a poor and potentially dangerous choice.

There is little argument that a shotgun makes for an excellent defensive weapon. It does the job well and is easy to obtain and operate. Unfortunately, carrying a loaded shotgun in many areas is both illegal and inappropriate. Most people just can't get away with carrying a shotgun while doing the grocery shopping or going out to dinner. As effective as a shotgun may be, it is not too easy to hide one on your person, which means you won't be able to have it with you most of the time. It is effective, yet less than practical for most purposes.

Some martial arts weapons such as nunchakus, the tonfa and the Chinese three-section staff are formidable weapons which can be more conveniently carried. But, with anything less than years of training in their use, the best a novice can hope to accomplish is hitting himself with it. If you are really unlucky, it will probably go flying out of your hand. The best time to make a fool of yourself is certainly not when you need to defend yourself. How many persons who purchase throwing knives ever take the time to learn how to throw them accurately and consistently? Many people who own throwing knives would be better off throwing rocks.

The nature of personal defense requires that you always remain prepared for surprise encounters. If you were able to predict in advance when you would have to defend yourself, there is no question that you would always be armed and prepared. Unfortunately, it doesn't work this way. Most circumstances when you have to defend yourself come as a total surprise. Not knowing when to expect the need to use a weapon for your defense does not mean you can't always be prepared. What it does mean is that you must prepare yourself in a realistic and practical manner.

If you knew in advance that you were going to be involved in a potentially dangerous encounter, you would want to prepare yourself by carrying an adequate weapon. Whatever chances you were taking by possessing or using this weapon should outweigh the risks of being unable to defend yourself. The decision of calculating which risk is greater can only be made if you know exactly what to expect from an adversary and when that moment will be. Many people say that they are willing to take the chance of carrying an illegal firearm so that they can protect themselves. The standard argument they often make is that they would rather be alive to face criminal charges for using the firearm than be injured or killed. Unless you are a major drug dealer or are on the organized crime hit list, this rationale is both foolish and dangerous. The greater the frequency with which you carry an illegal firearm (or any other illegal weapon for that matter), the greater the odds of your being caught with it. The constant chance of apprehension clearly outweighs the benefit to be gained from being able to defend yourself in a chance encounter.

Never forget the previous warning that a good weapon should help protect you from criminals and not make you into a criminal for using it or having it in your possession. An illegal handgun is an excellent weapon for personal defense if one ignores the risks entailed in carrying it. Anyone who chooses to carry an illegal handgun with them all of the time greatly increases the chances of being apprehended and charged with the offense. The odds of being apprehended for this crime are generally greater than the odds of the gun being used for your personal defense. Sooner or later something will happen and cause a problem for you.

In relation to any weapon, the deliberate decision to break the law should not be taken lightly. If you choose to do something illegal, you should be prepared for the often unpleasant consequences. Unfortunately, this decision which most otherwise law-abiding citizens have to make at some time or another, is far from simple. It is often difficult to view such complex circumstances in black and white terms. When you really feel threatened and scared, good judgement does not always prevail. Fear does not always lead us to take those actions which are in our best interests.

The decision to carry a weapon is generally based on your real and perceived need to protect yourself, your family and property. Other than chronic criminals and fools, no one chooses to carry a weapon for the sole purpose of breaking the law.

If you knew for certain that three armed assailants would be waiting outside your home tomorrow morning, you could make preparations to either avoid the encounter or to be armed and prepared. If you chose to defend yourself, a rifle or shotgun might be a good choice in this circumstance. If you wanted to be prepared for the possibility of someone trying to rob you at an undetermined and unknown time, carrying a rifle with you all of the time is just not realistic or practical. A basic pocketknife is much more practical for such a chance encounter though equally less effective for a definitely known dangerous encounter such as described above.

What separates a good weapon from a poor one depends not only on the object being used, but also on the skill of the person wielding it. Any weapon is only as effective as the ability with which it is used. The more powerful and lethal weapons can live up to their

capability only if the needed expertise is present to make it work to your advantage. A high power handgun in the hands of an inexperienced novice is no more effective in a defensive situation than a rubber knife would be. Having the skills to make a weapon serve your interests is the key to survival. It is the skill of the user which makes the weapon effective. A skilled fighter can inflict more damage and better defend himself with a small knife than an unskilled person could do with a long sword.

It is a common tendency for many people to gravitate toward what appear to them as the more powerful and ultimate weapons. The fallacy is thinking that the weapon itself will make you better prepared in an adversarial situation, that simply by possessing a wide range of weapons, you will have the ability to use them to your advantage. The common belief is that if you possess all sorts of weapons, you will magically have the ability to use them. False confidence can be deadly.

A good example pertains to the recent popularity of the Balisong Butterfly knife. Millions of these knives have been purchased, often at costs exceeding \$25.00. The media and advertisements portray the lightning speed and dexterity with which these knives can be manipulated. The outcome is that many people believe that if they purchase one of these knives, they too will be able to flash them about. The unfortunate reality is that most persons who purchase these knives fail to acquire the expertise to effectively use it. In the hands of a skilled operator, a Butterfly knife can indeed be an effective and intimidating weapon. In the hands of an inexperienced novice, an expensive Butterfly knife is no more effective than a \$1.00 butter knife would be. In an actual combat situation, the butter knife would probably be the more effective choice. The complexity of manipulating the Butterfly knife could render its operation more dangerous to the user than to an adversary. The knife itself makes a poor weapon unless the skill to operate it is present.

Handguns are often viewed as one of the more powerful and ultimate weapons because of their ease of concealment and potentially lethal firepower. With the proper training and experience, this holds true. Without this skill and training, a handgun is still dangerous but not necessarily to the intended adversary. Drawing a concealed

handgun from under one's clothing takes more expertise than many people would think. The mere possession of a weapon on your body does not insure that it is readily accessible for use. Carrying it in an often awkward concealed position under layers of clothing can be more of an impediment than expected. Imagine the feeling of needing this weapon to save your life and being unable to get at it.

It is amazing how many untrained and inexperienced persons end up shooting themselves, their clothing or anything else nearby in the process of drawing a gun from a holster. (Real tough guys don't shoot themselves in the foot.) Even having the ability to draw such a weapon does not guarantee that you can effectively hit a target under the pressure of a real life confrontation. Hitting a moving person during a combat situation is a far cry from shooting at a stationary target. Research on police officers who are trained in the use of firearms indicates that during many encounters where a gun is drawn and fired, two of the rounds are typically fired prematurely into the ground in front of the intended target. In the case of a typical revolver which only holds six rounds, only four rounds remain with which to hit a moving target. It is not an unrealistic assumption that the vast majority of persons who possess handguns are not qualified to use them effectively. Having an illegal firearm only compounds this problem. Depending on where you live, it may be totally out of the question to practice firing with an illegal firearm. Without drawing undue attention to yourself, how are you going to be able to fire the several hundred rounds needed to keep in good practice? Even the purchase of ammunition can be a problem in the many communities which regulate its sale. Just having one gun with six bullets in it does not make for a marksman.

Having the skill to accurately use and fire a handgun fosters the ability to judge the gun skills of an adversary. It is not at all uncommon for an adversary to think he is pointing a handgun at you when in reality it is pointing several feet away. This may not minimize your chances of being shot, only the chances of your being shot deliberately. The lack of skill with a weapon does not make it any less lethal, only less predictable. I would certainly feel better if I knew that a gun being pointed at me had its safety on. I would

feel even better yet if I knew this and the assailant did not. Experience alone breeds this knowledge and ability to observe.

The current popularity of martial arts weapons helps contribute to their reputation for being fearsome, lethal and effective. We are told that these weapons have been around for thousands of years and have survived the test of time. The reality is that they are indeed effective weapons, but from a different time and for different purposes. In a time before the advent of modern firearms, martial arts weapons represented the state of the art. Wars were won with them.

Nunchakus, swords, throwing stars, bo staffs and the like can be effective weapons for certain purposes and circumstances. They are even more effective when your opponents are less or equally armed. If your adversary is likely to be armed with an automatic firearm, a wooden staff is hardly the answer. For the thousands of martial arts weapons which are purchased each year, only a small fraction fall into the hands of someone with the training to use them effectively. Several years of intensive training is not what most of us have in mind when we select a weapon for personal defense. Being ready and prepared is one thing, being obsessive about it is yet another. Acquiring the necessary defensive skills is one of the most important things you can do. The path to acquiring these skills must be both realistic and attainable which means a weapon which requires a lifetime of practice is not the best answer for the average person.

A reasonable degree of simplicity of operation is a key ingredient for a good weapon. Some individuals may opt to study the use of, for example, a sai and pursue it actively for many years. The ultimate outcome is that after many years of diligent study and hard practice, they will in fact be the master of a very effective and powerful weapon. You can spend years conditioning your hands to deliver lethal blows. The ultimate question is whether the investment in time, energy and pain is worthwhile for you. To spend the majority of one's life in preparation for a physical encounter which may never occur is not necessarily the wisest investment of time.

Being prepared does not have to entail devoting one's entire life to this cause.

Accessibility, ease of concealment and portability are important attributes of an effective weapon. Unless you can predict with total accuracy just when you will need to defend yourself, a good weapon is one which you can have with you all or most of the time.

Many people keep a rifle or shotgun in their home and have a false sense of confidence that they can get it any time they wish should the need arise. If something bad should happen, you can always go home to get your gun. In reality, this means that you have a weapon to use only after you have the need for it. That would fall into the category of revenge which is a far cry from personal defense, and can be a very dangerous pursuit.

Though I have lived in various parts of the country, there are few if any places you can walk around with any obviously visible weapon. Unless a weapon can be carried with you the majority of the time at the majority of places where you go, it's of minimal use.

Any weapon you carry and use should be more effective in your hands than in the hands of your opponent. There is probably no greater humiliation than being disarmed by an adversary and having your own weapon used against you. This is yet another reason for the need for adequate training. If you have the skills to use a weapon properly, you will have a reasonable chance to render an adversary harmless so that they can not injure you. An untrained person who brings a weapon into a confrontation stands the risk of sustaining even greater injury. Threatening someone with a weapon which you are unable to effectively use will usually insure greater retaliation. Unless you are prepared to wield a weapon to win, you stand to gain nothing by the mere possession of it.

If you carry a knife, you must be prepared to stab someone with it. If you carry a gun, you must be prepared to shoot someone with it. The difference between being prepared to use a weapon and making an empty bluff can make the difference between life and death. If you need to pull a weapon on an adversary, make sure that your determination to use it effectively is apparent. Any weapon is only as good as the person using it.

Chapter 4

Choosing a Weapon

There is a wide range of weapons available. Some shoot holes, cut slices, smash bones and the like. The only thing that guns, knives and nightsticks have in common is that they are weapons. Each one is vastly different from the others and accomplishes its mission as a weapon in different ways. Each one does its share of damage and injury to an adversary in different ways. The choice of what type of harm you want to do to an adversary is entirely yours. Some choices are better than others. Most persons who are concerned about personal defense want to be prepared for a potentially dangerous chance encounter. If your interests are in being an aggressor or you are intent on violating the law, this information is clearly not going to help you (nor should it). Making preparation for a chance encounter is vastly different than being an aggressor or going to war against an adversary. The information I am presenting deals exclusively with taking reasonable and prudent preparations for your own defense.

A weapon is nothing more than a tool to effectively carry out this goal. The choice of which tool to use or have available for use is based on a variety of circumstances which can be different for each person. Variables such as where you live, your age and lifestyle, can all effect the decision of which weapon is best for you. Differences between urban and rural cultures can vastly affect the appropriateness of a weapon that you select. Going out at night in a high crime urban area will clearly require more preparation for defense than taking a walk in the country. The paradox is that the most dangerous of urban environments are often the most restrictive regarding possession of defensive weapons.

There are many people who have the ability to legally carry a firearm yet are morally opposed to doing so. There are equal numbers of people who want to be able to defend themselves but are not comfortable with seriously injuring another human being (even if that human being is trying to harm them). Whatever weapon you choose for your own personal defense, it must be one which you can live with using. If the circumstances arise, you must be prepared to do whatever it takes to survive.

Some of the questions you must ask yourself include:

- Could you take someone else's life? Even if that someone was trying to kill you? Do you have the presence of mind to react appropriately under the pressure of a potentially violent confrontation?
- Is it a type of weapon you are comfortable with? People who hate loud noises should not carry guns. People who are all thumbs would do well to stay away from folding knives.
- Would you be comfortable in having to use it? If you can't stand the sight of blood, knives and guns may not be a realistic consideration.
- Is it adequate to do the job intended, to better enable your personal defense?
- Do you have the skill and ability to use it? Have you practiced with it? Do you know what it can and can't do? In an emergency, will you even remember that you have it with you?
- Will carrying it on your person scare you? Will you forever be afraid of impaling yourself on that sheath knife you are carrying or being electrocuted with your own shocker?
- Will you walk around being scared of apprehension for possessing it? Will passing through the vicinity of a metal detector make you want to wet your pants?
- Is it reasonably concealable for day to day carrying? If it weighs fifteen pounds or prevents you from being able to sit down, you have a big problem. Try walking all day with a rifle barrel down your pants leg.

- Is it carried secure enough so that it doesn't fall out when you don't want it to? Will you be bending down in a crowded public place to pick up your illegal firearm which just plunked down to the ground?
- Is its concealment consistent with your daily style of dress and activity? Just as "T" shirts and shoulder holsters are not compatible, a small pocket knife in a pocket under a thin, tight fabric would be equally obvious. You don't want to be in the position of saying, "Sorry I can't sit down, but you see, I have this fifteen-inch meat cleaver in my back pocket."
- Is it comfortable to have on your person for extended periods of time? If adequate concealment is dependent upon your wearing a bulky jacket all of the time, it may get a bit warm when you have to go indoors. Do you really want to attract attention for being the only person wearing a heavy coat during the summer?
- Is it disposable? Can you afford to lose it if you have to use it?

What makes an ideal weapon for your personal defense is a judgement call only you can make. This is a very important and personal decision. A decision which you may not be able to live without.

Section Two

Profile and Application of Specific Weapons

Chapter 5

Blackjack



Figure 5-1

Blackjack

A potent weapon offering ease of concealment, simplicity of use and impressive power. You may never want to leave home without one!

One of my favorite and field proven weapons is the blackjack (see Figure 5-1), a leather wrapped spring of six to nine inches overall length with a lead weight at the end. With the appropriate skill to

use it efficiently, this weapon fills the bill of being concealable, readily available and highly effective at inflicting damage.

The blackjack is one of the most classic blunt instruments, whose creation goes back centuries. It is merely a clever adaptation of filling an old sock with a bunch of coins and hitting someone over the head with it. The addition of a short spring added the needed leverage to inflict a snapping motion thus increasing its power.

Within the last two decades, a new adaptation of the blackjack came out on the market. This new item was called a "slapper" which differed only in having a broader, flattened, weighted end. This newer version was created as a direct consequence of the lethal potential of the earlier blackjacks.

A blow to the head of a subject with a blackjack has been known to produce a wound similar to that of a large caliber bullet. A properly wielded blackjack can in fact make a sizeable hole in a person's skull, thus making other parts of the body more preferable for a target. This result can be accomplished with minimal training and minimal force, which contributes to the lethal effectiveness of this particular weapon. One of the major negative aspects of using a blackjack is the ease with which a lethal blow can be inflicted. An attempt to render a subject unconscious may well result in serious injury or even death. While this represents a potential liability for the user, it reinforces the lethal effectiveness of this particular weapon.

The blackjack is easy to carry, easy to use and easy to do damage with. A blackjack can be easily carried in one's pocket without being visually detectable. Its manner of construction, which usually includes a thong type handle facilitates its speedy and easy withdrawal from pockets, clothing, etc.

The blackjack is one of the underpopularized weapons, which contributes to a certain mystique about its use. Most people have never seen a blackjack and those who have encountered it on the receiving end usually remember little other than its speed and effectiveness. With adequate skill, a blackjack can be drawn from one's pocket, used to deliver a powerful stopping blow and returned to one's pocket within seconds. Unlike some other weapons which are flashed about and displayed, a blackjack is rarely pulled until it is ready to be

used. Part of its effectiveness comes from its surprise application against an assailant. You don't see anything coming and you are then suddenly struck with amazing force. I have yet to meet the assailant who needed to be struck on the head, or anywhere else for that matter with a blackjack more than once.

Some of the mystique about a blackjack and the resultant fear it tends to generate stems from the unfamiliarity about its use. Someone wielding a blackjack generates the image of a professional assailant, someone who knows how to inflict serious harm on another. The blackjack is one of those weapons commonly associated with organized crime figures, the classic back alley type of weapon familiar to hoodlums of all ages.

In contrast to the criminal image of the blackjack, it remains a long time favorite tool of law enforcement officers. Aside from its unquestioned potency, it is one of the few weapons which doesn't significantly add to the already twenty-plus pounds of gear that a uniformed officer wears. It is highly potent for its size and easy to carry in any pocket. Implementing its use entails only grabbing its thong to place it in your hand.

A genuine spring and leather blackjack is rarely the weapon of choice for an amateur. A professional who wants to end any confrontation with a single (and hopefully non-lethal) well-placed blow will invariably choose a blackjack as a weapon option. The vast majority of police personnel carry one for this reason alone. Given the choice of striking someone with your bare hand or using a blackjack, which would you choose? Being on the receiving end of a blow from a blackjack is indeed a fearful experience. The mere threat of striking someone is usually sufficient to insure their cooperation and submission.

Although a blackjack is generally categorized as an illegal weapon for a civilian to carry, it generally does not represent the degree or risk and liability as do other weapons, including knives and firearms. From a somewhat ignorant and innocent perspective, a blackjack does not typically look as threatening and menacing as it really is. This works to your advantage. It has not been uncommon to pass through an airport metal detector and other check points with a

blackjack in one's possession and be allowed to keep it with you. Many untrained persons will accept a feeble excuse that you carry it for personal protection against muggers and not choose to confiscate it or charge you with possession. This results purely from their ignorance of how effective a weapon it can be. Until it is actually brandished in your hand, it tends to look awfully innocent and harmless. Take heed, this is one of the best kept weapon secrets.

Homemade varieties usually range from the sock filled with quarters to rubber radiator hoses filled with melted fishing weights at the tip. It is not the most complex of weapons and simplicity is one of its major attractions. If you are unable to buy one, it will not require much in the way of imagination or materials to make one.

Chapter 6

Knives

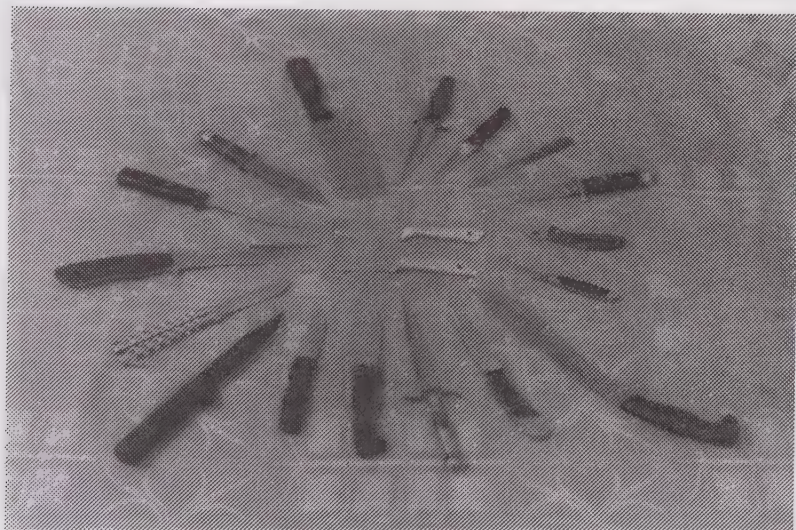


Figure 6-1

Collection of Knives

Knives are some of the most culturally popular weapons in existence. Though many are suited to particular tasks, almost all have potential as a defensive tool.

The Folding Pocket Knife

A folding pocket knife is perhaps one of the most innocent appearing, underestimated and socially acceptable weapons around. It is almost an American tradition that it is acceptable for most civilians to carry a pocket knife with them. Unless unusually large or menacing, a pocket knife is usually perceived to be more of a general purpose tool than a weapon. This is a major asset for anyone who needs to carry a weapon which will not be perceived or detected by most others as being a weapon. A pocket knife is indeed a tool, a very effective and versatile one at that. (Figure 6-2.)



Figure 6-2

Assortment of Folding Knives

The biggest advantage of folding knives is their size and portability. Being able to conveniently put it in your pocket insures that you are more likely to carry it with you. Models with locking blades provide increased defensive potential and the handle of all folding models can be used to punch and strike with.

Although any weapon is better than none, the pocket knife should be considered more a tool of utility and convenience than a purely defensive weapon. Some of the characteristics which make a folding pocket knife a good weapon include:

- It has a blade length of at least three inches and is kept sharp.
- The blade has a solid lock in the open position which will not close on your hand while in use.
- It is of a solid and relatively unbreakable construction, including blade (440 Stainless Steel is best), handle and pivot joint.
- It has a sufficiently heavy and dense handle which can be easily held on to and wielded effectively and safely in both the open and closed positions. The heavier and thicker the handle, the better it is.
- Its size and shape contours to your hand.

A good pocket knife as described above can be used both as a cutting instrument and as a blunt striking instrument. A good knife which folds into a solid four to five-inch handle can effectively be used as a striking weapon when in the closed position. This represents two weapons in one, including a blade for cutting and the equivalent of a five-inch piece of steel for striking and pummeling. Few other weapons of such simplicity and innocence offer such diversity of use.

One of my personal favorites has been a Buck knife with a 4½-inch blade and a heavy brass and wood handle. There is no question as to the effectiveness of the blade on this knife, which locks solidly in the open position. The added benefit, which is perhaps the least utilized aspect of this weapon, is its handle. While in the closed position, the handle of this knife fits solidly in my hand and extends past my fingers when held in a clenched fist. The brass ends which extend out serve as an excellent weapon to punch and hit with, while not being obvious to detect. It can be held discreetly (closed blade position) in a clenched fist without any outward appearance of your readiness. This enables the closed knife to be used as effectively as a short length of metal pipe held in the fist. A blow in this fashion carries

the lethal effectiveness of being struck with brass knuckles. (See Figure 6-3.)

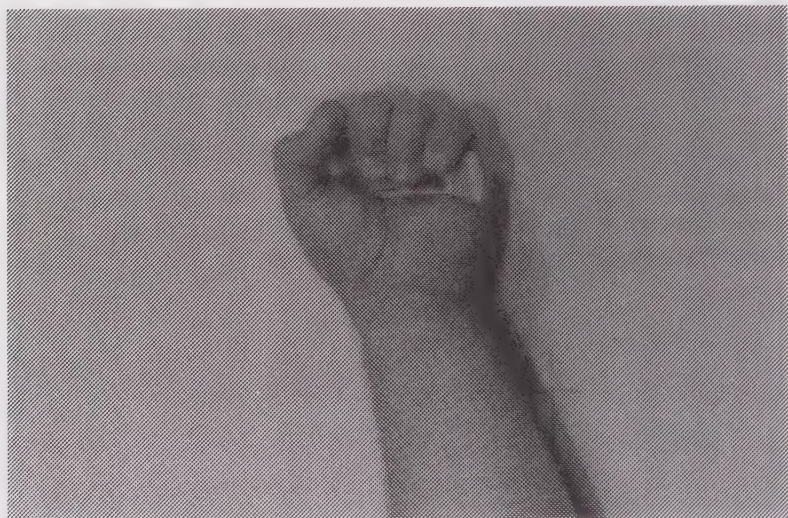


Figure 6-3

Knife Handle Used For Punching

A folding knife can be used for more than just cutting and stabbing. A closed folding knife makes an excellent blunt object to strike with in a closed fist.

In most circumstances, being able to knock someone out is preferable to, and more socially acceptable than slicing their body open. Remember, personal defense entails doing no more injury to an adversary than is absolutely necessary. A good folding knife provides the option and advantage of being adaptable to such contingencies.

Whatever other weapons you need or choose to carry, there is no excuse other than poor preparation and ignorance for not carrying a good folding pocket knife with you all of the time. Even if it is not your primary, first line of defense weapon, no other item is as convenient, versatile and safe to carry while still having a lethal potential.

Throwing Knives

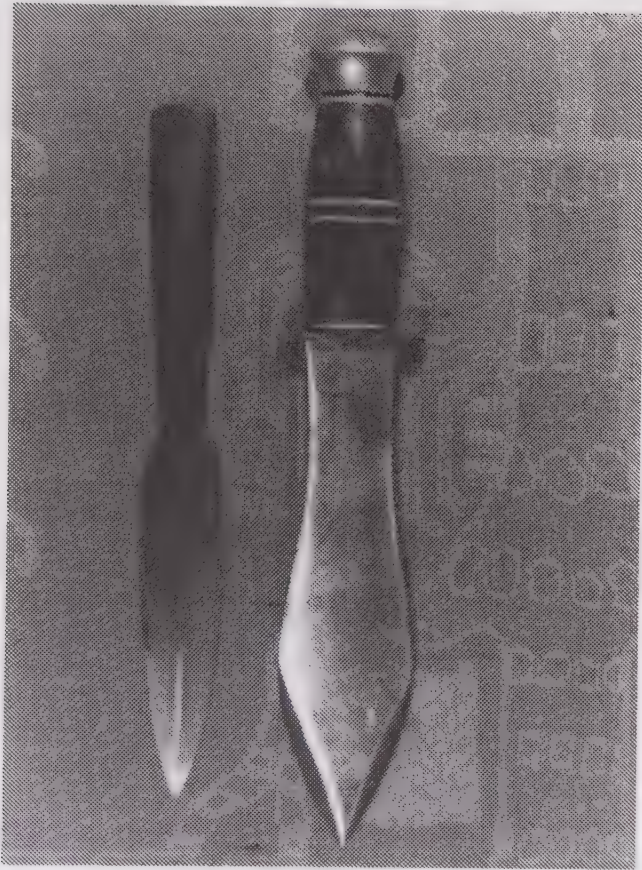


Figure 6-4

Throwing Knives

Although strictly a one shot affair, these knives are designed for strength and balance in being used as projectiles. As with any other weapon, the skill of the user is more important than the object being used.

Television and circus acts have shown us how accurate and effective throwing knives can be. If you happen to be a circus performer or stunt man this may well be true. Unfortunately, we are dealing with real people in real life situations which do not support this image of throwing knives.

Any weapon is effective for personal defense so long as it is in your possession and under your control. Carrying a knife which you throw at an adversary is risky. The risks are:

- That you will miss your target altogether.
- That the butt of the knife and not the point will strike the target.
- That your adversary will now have a weapon to use against you.
- That you will not have a second chance to use the knife for your own defense.

If the above chances seem worthwhile for you to take, then perhaps a throwing knife is a weapon for you. For most people in most circumstances, these risks are hardly worth considering.

To effectively and accurately throw a knife (whether it is specifically designed for throwing or not) requires a significant degree of skill and ability. Any knife thrown will invariably spin in an arc until it strikes its target. The distance that you are throwing the knife will determine at which point in its rotation it will strike the target. Any change in distance from several inches to several feet will effect which end of the knife hits the target. If the knife is always thrown from the same distance, it certainly is possible to develop a reasonable degree of accuracy. In a defensive situation, this is clearly not going to be possible.

There are some knives which are balanced and designed to be thrown without spinning. The degree of skill and mastery to effectively carry this out each and every time is just not the kind of circumstance you should be willing to bet your life on.

Ballistic knives are fairly new on the market and are indeed a fairly lethal option. They are knives which are propelled from their

sheath by a powerful spring which is designed to propel the blade at a target with a high degree of power and accuracy. Law enforcement and other regulatory bodies have done a good job in keeping these weapons off the market and out of reach for most people. Despite the significant advantages a ballistic knife offers, it still remains a one shot weapon. If you miss your mark, you are without a weapon. Throwing away any weapon in any manner or form is just not a reasonable action to take, especially when your life may depend upon it.

Daggers and Fixed Blade Knives



Figure 6-5

Assortment of Daggers

Knife blades are designed for a variety of tasks. The dagger is designed for one task only, to be used as a weapon.

While a folding knife offers the advantage of portability, a fixed blade knife offers the advantage of sturdiness. A fixed blade knife will never accidentally fold over and cut your own fingers off. Equally, you will never have to struggle and stumble trying to open a folding knife during a moment of panic. A fixed blade provides the feature of simplicity of use. It requires only one step to bring it out to your defense, that being the removal from its sheath. Once you have grasped its handle, there is nothing else you need to do. A folding knife requires two distinct actions before it can be utilized. It needs to be removed from its sheath (or your pocket) and then it requires that you open it. For most folding knives, you need two hands to safely and successfully unfold the blade.

With all other factors being equal, a fixed blade knife tends to look meaner and more intimidating. Someone brandishing a pocket knife tends to look like a well prepared gentleman. Someone brandishing a large kitchen knife tends to look like a homicidal psycho. All things being considered, there are times when it can be to your advantage to look like a homicidal psycho. You need to judge your own needs and circumstances.

The trade-off with fixed blade knives is that it is somewhat impractical to go about your daily life with a huge Bowie knife hanging from your belt. Wearing one in this fashion will certainly attract the attention of others around you. The general perception is that no one carries about such a big blade unless they are looking for trouble. If it appears that you are looking for trouble, you will invariably find it. Being prepared for personal defense is no excuse for causing the trouble to begin with.

There are some reasonable compromises in fixed blade knife styles and I have come to endorse some of the smaller daggers as being both effective and convenient. The primary difference between a dagger and other knife styles is that daggers have a sharpened edge on both sides of the blade. Most daggers have sort of a wedge shape and are fairly thick down the center of the blade. This thickness provides a considerable amount of strength to the knife, making it much more resistant to breaking or bending. If you had the need, for example, to puncture a steel gas tank, a dagger type blade would be the preferred

tool for the job. In a street fight knife encounter, a dagger type blade provides yet an additional advantage. Having a sharp edge on both sides of the blade enables you to slash it about in any direction. A traditional knife blade allows you to cut in only one direction, the direction of its sharpened edge. Not having to change your grip on the weapon in hand makes a dagger that much more effective and potentially lethal.

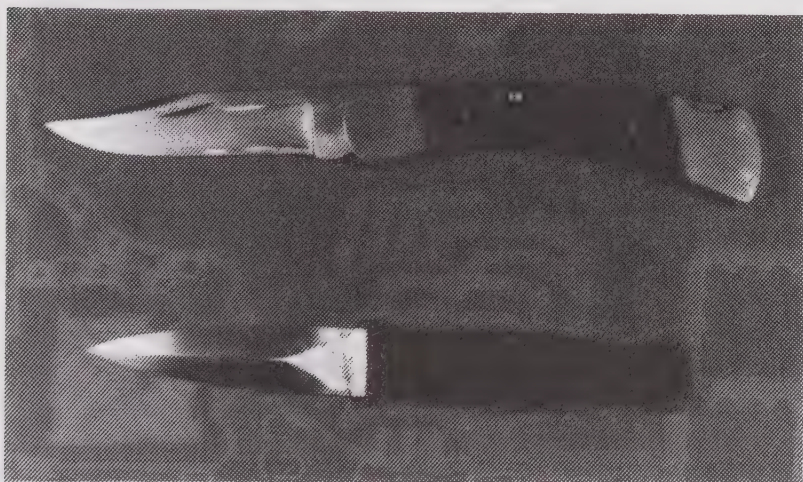


Figure 6-6

Gerber and Buck Knives

Two of the author's all time favorites for routine personal defense. They are both utilitarian workhorses which can be lethally effective.

One of my favorite daggers is the Gerber Guardian with a 3½-inch blade (Figure 6-6). It comes with a belt clip holster and a friction fit mechanism to hold the knife in place. This setup allows the knife to be worn with the handle facing either up or down. The knife can easily be withdrawn with a sharp pull and does not require any cumbersome snaps or restraining straps. This dagger has been my favorite for many years because I can safely, discreetly and conveniently carry it on my person. I can remove it in an instant and brandish

it in a defensive ready position. (See Figures 6-7 & 6-8.) Although the blade is only 3½ inches, the ease and speed with which it can be pulled out more than compensates. It is a very sturdy knife and has a small finger guard to prevent your hand from slipping up on the blade.



Figure 6-7

Concealed Knife Carry

When worn under clothing, this method of carry provides easy access and ease of removal. Having it hang directly over one's rear pocket provides the added safety factor should it ever fall from its sheath.

I would always wear this knife in an inverted position (handle facing up) on my belt over my rear left pants pocket. When wearing it in this fashion, I could always remove it without anyone seeing me reach for it. With my left hand dangling at my side, I had only

to reach slightly back to grasp the handle and pull down. Assuming that a potential adversary is in front of you, this knife can be removed from its holster and placed securely in your hand without any of these movements being detected. In a flash, this blade can be brought



Figure 6-8

Gerber Guardian Being Drawn

When worn inverted on the rear of one's belt, this knife can be withdrawn almost without detection. It is a major defensive advantage to be able to remove a weapon from its sheath and place it in your hand without betraying your intentions.

out in front of you towards your adversary. The advantage of wearing it over a rear pocket was that the handle could be tucked into the pocket for added security and concealment. The handle would only extend about one or two inches into the pocket, which is more than enough to provide additional protection. In the unlikely event that

it would fall from the holster accidentally, it would merely fall down into my pocket. It is always an embarrassment and a potential liability when a weapon of any sort falls out from your person in public. The effective carrying of a knife in this fashion does require some basic modification of your clothing if you don't want it to be detected. The wearing of a jacket or sleeveless vest is the perfect coverup for almost any type of weapon. A dagger such as described above is small and flat enough that it can successfully be concealed under a plain "T" shirt so long as the shirt is not tucked in your pants. Remember, this knife would be hidden toward your rear so you need only adjust your body profile so other people are looking at your front. There is never an advantage in taking the chance of advertising that you are carrying a concealed weapon of any sort.

Butterfly Knives

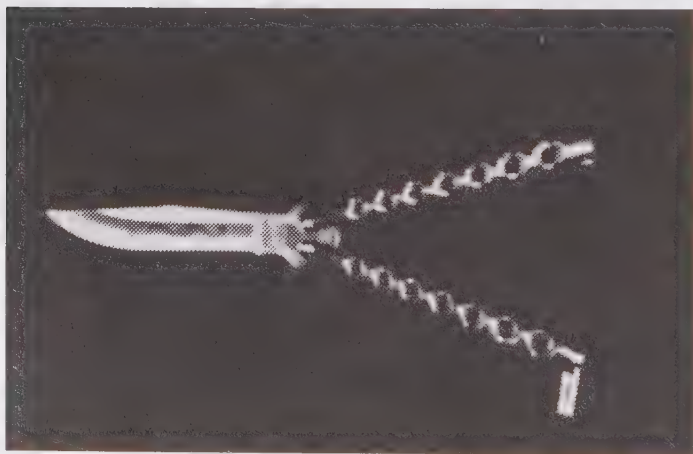


Figure 6-9

Balisong Butterfly Knife

A potentially formidable weapon which has become fashionable of late. Though structurally sound, the actual use of a Butterfly knife requires a significant degree of practice and skill. In the hands of the untrained, it is more likely to sever their own fingers.

Earlier in this book were some comments on the use of folding Butterfly knives. Since writing that, I have spent an untold number of hours practicing with one. The model that I chose is fairly representative of some of the better ones on the market. It is made entirely of stainless steel with a 4¼-inch blade and 5-inch slotted handles (see Figure 6-9). I will admit that it is certainly fun to play with by the single handed opening and closing of it. The most obvious problem is that if done improperly, it can instantly slice off your own fingers. Despite a good amount of practice, I can only manipulate it successfully if I am looking at what I am doing. If I had to pull it out of my pocket in a hurry during a life threatening emergency, the odds of my opening it safely are pretty slim. If I had nothing else to do for the next five or six years, I could probably master it. This difficulty factor takes a lot of the practicality out of relying on a Butterfly knife for personal defense. One additional note for your reference is that an increasing number of jurisdictions have made the possession of Butterfly knives illegal. This is perhaps the same mentality that outlawed switch-blades. As if any one type of knife is more dangerous than another or that real criminals will be deterred by such laws.

Overview of Knives

Regarding any knife or blade type instrument, stabbing, slashing or cutting someone is not the most comfortable or pleasant of experiences. Even if your life is on the line, responding in this fashion may be harder than you think. It is one thing to threaten and try to intimidate someone with a knife and yet another to actually stab them with it. A word of caution is not to overestimate yourself. One final factor is the legality of your actions and your ability to live with these consequences. Stabbing someone forty-nine times just because they asked you for a dollar will not do much for your future. Unless a situation is truly life threatening (and even then under some very specific circumstances), you may not be able to justify such excessive use of force.

Chapter 7

Tear Gas

Almost everyone has seen the advertisements for tear gas in various publications and stores. All of the promotionals proclaim the amazing non-lethal effectiveness with which the gas can render an assailant totally harmless. They claim how easy it is to spray it in someone's face from distances of several feet and that it is guaranteed to disable any perpetrator in an effective yet harmless manner. They tell you how just one whiff will render a three hundred pound assailant into a humbled mass of jello.

The most common types available for personal defense come in an aerosol canister of three to six inches in length. They all contain a pressurized gas or foam which is capable of spraying out a stream for up to eight feet away. A variety of formulas are used, with each manufacturer claiming theirs is the best. CN and CS gas are two of the most common varieties on the market. The police and military markets each seem to have their own distinct preference.

The actual effectiveness of a tear gas spray can greatly vary. On the positive side, there have been many instances when the tear gas canister is held out and aimed toward an assailant with surprising results without even having to press the button. Most people are terribly afraid of being sprayed in the face with these chemicals and will often back down when confronted with it. This is due in large part to the media hype which states how it burns your eyes, nose and mouth and leaves you laying on the ground in a blinded and half-dazed stupor. Anyone who believes this is what it can do is well prepared to avoid such an outcome. From personal experience,

I have found tear gas to be one of those weapons which is more effective as a deterrent than when it is actually used. I am not saying that being sprayed with tear gas in one's face does not and cannot produce serious pain and discomfort. What I am saying is that I have encountered many individuals who do not sufficiently react to this degree of pain and discomfort. A dangerous assailant who is intent on doing you serious bodily harm needs to be totally and completely rendered harmless. The use of tear gas does not always result in this certainty, which can leave you still at risk. Persons who are psychologically enraged, unbalanced and those under the influence of certain drugs may not have the desired reaction to tear gas. I have in fact witnessed individuals sprayed directly in the eyes and mouth from a distance of only an inch or two who continued to keep fighting. This should not detract from the many instances where it was effective and successfully did stop a violent assailant. The problem is that the outcome is not consistent or predictable. When your life is at stake, the effectiveness of your weapon needs to be both consistent and predictable.

One of the possible problems in using an aerosol tear gas is the difficulty of hitting one's target. In an outdoor environment, the spray can be carried with the wind and blown back into your own face. Even when used indoors in a closed environment, there remains a good probability of your inhaling and contacting some of the chemical. This can be an unpleasant experience for anyone in the immediate vicinity of where the chemical is being sprayed. There are also instances where the chemical stream deflects off of the assailant or surroundings and has a detrimental effect on you.

Because these tear gas canisters are small, convenient and quasi-legal to carry in many places, you should consider having one with you as a backup weapon. I do not recommend such devices as a primary weapon, because of the reasons outlined above. There will certainly be times when it will be highly effective, yet you need to be prepared for those instances when it is not. A weapon such as tear gas can create a false sense of security because your expectation of its effectiveness can outweigh its actual ability.

An additional word of caution is that any pressurized aerosol container can explode under high temperature or develop a loss of pressure

over time. During severe cold weather conditions, pressurized aerosols often become significantly less effective. I would strongly recommend not leaving one in your car's glove compartment for extended periods during the summer months. The effective range of a tear gas spray can be reduced from several feet to only several inches. Imagine the immediate danger you would be in when attempting to defend yourself with a tear gas spray and nothing happens when you press the button. You could, of course, test the canister every morning, but imagine how difficult this could be. Where would you spray it and what would you spray it at that would be safe? How many times could you test it before it becomes too de-pressurized to remain effective? This would be like playing Russian Roulette with your own defense.

Chapter 8

Bullwhip



Figure 8-1

Bullwhip

Although it may look threatening and intimidating, the bullwhip is typically effective for little more than making noise.

Indiana Jones fends off adversaries, villains and other assorted evils with his trusty bullwhip. In fact, he can conquer whole armies, climb mountains and rescue maidens in distress using his whip. It would seem that there is no weapon or tool more indispensable to his survival than this single item. In the world of Hollywood this is probably true. In the real world of survival one needs to be a bit more realistic.

Don't get me wrong. Whips can be useful and they certainly can be a lot of fun. I have had one for years and practice with it at times. I even take it with me on certain occasions and find it to be the most useful tool for one particular type of defense.

I frequently take long walks along country roads for both exercise and relaxation. Nothing irks me more than being harassed and threatened by the dozens of country dogs who think they need to attack (or at least look like they are going to) anything that walks by. I wouldn't mind as much if they would stay on their own property and just let me pass. Usually, they follow me a safe distance behind just to make sure I can't let my guard down. In all honesty, I really do love dogs (and in fact have four myself) even including the downright stupid and nasty ones. I have carried sticks, knives and handguns on these walks and came to realize that none of these were practical, effective or appropriate to use. I certainly don't want to shoot, stab or club some dumb mutt. All I want to do is scare him away.

One of the things a whip does best is to make a lot of noise. A good bullwhip, when cracked properly, sounds just like a gun shot. One crack and the dogs run off each time. Aside from the loud noise, the movement of the whip curling through the air will unnerve the most intimidating of dogs.

If stray dogs are a problem, a bullwhip is an excellent choice for a lightweight and easy to carry defensive weapon. Persons seeing you carrying it may think you are a little odd (or adventurous) but few will take offense at its presence. It does the job and does it well. I have yet to hear of anyone being arrested for cracking a whip to scare off a stray dog. If you seek adventure and want to fend off human adversaries Indiana Jones style, a bullwhip may be for you. If your life will depend upon it, you had better think of

something else. A bullwhip is one of those items which has tremendous deterrent value. Walk down the street with one and I assure you that no one will come close to you. Isn't there an old saying about staying away from crazy people? Walking around with a bullwhip in your possession makes you look anything but normal.

The best choices are a quality braided leather of eight to twelve feet in length. If it's shorter it won't snap as loud and if it is longer it becomes more difficult to move about. One additional point: a plain leather whip will not make much noise unless a "popper" is attached to the tip. A popper is a short (approximately one foot or less) length of thin braided nylon or the like. The leather tip will become frayed in no time unless a popper is attached.

Chapter 9

Firearms

Most people correctly view firearms as the ultimate in personal defense weapons. If you want the ability to effectively kill someone, this assumption is correct.

From the perspectives of practicality, concealment and effectiveness, there are many choices to make in firearms selection.

There is much current debate amongst law enforcement and other groups as to what is the most effective caliber in terms of stopping power. There are also ongoing debates as to whether revolvers or semi-automatics are best.

Most of these arguments are almost totally immaterial from the civilian perspective of personal defense. There is no question that a .45 caliber bullet will make a bigger hole than a .22 caliber bullet will (under certain conditions that is). Since we are talking about making holes in living people, the actual size of the penetration doesn't matter. Human beings can be injured by and killed by bullet holes of almost any size. Since it is always preferable to injure or wound someone rather than kill them, there is little point in debating which size bullet can kill better.

In the majority of confrontations with a violent aggressor, the mere showing of any handgun of any caliber will usually be enough of a deterrent to cause them to back off. The firing of a warning shot (not *at* the aggressor) will generally convince them of the lethal reality of your weapon as well as your preparedness to use it against them. Should they fail to back off, a bullet wound to any part of their

body will generally result in their making a hasty retreat to prevent receiving any further injury. People who are shot will always bleed and experience pain. There are few human beings who desire to experience this feeling any more than they have to. A person shot in the head/face region is likely to be mortally injured no matter what caliber bullet was used. Bigger is not always better.

The few possible exceptions to this rule apply to persons who are mentally unstable or under the influence of drugs. The options available to you in these instances would be to shoot to cripple, shoot to kill, or to retreat yourself. A mere .22 caliber can accomplish significant harm when fired into someone's legs. Despite the claims of many police and ammunition interests, you don't need the largest and most destructive caliber round to successfully disable an assailant. Some of the more popular hollow points and pre-fragmented rounds represent overkill in the most extreme. Being able to rip out all of someone's vital organs with a single shot is rarely an advantage to any civilian in a defensive situation.

If you are legally able to carry a handgun, carry whatever you wish. If you are determined to carry a handgun illegally, bigger is not always better. The difference between being prepared and being ready for a war will make a major difference should you ever have to use your weapon or be apprehended for possessing it. I know of many otherwise law abiding citizens who carry a handgun for personal defense. None of them are foolish enough to carry something with a twenty round capacity. Unless you are in the drug business or are looking to assassinate a small biker gang, there is no advantage in being over-armed. The police and the courts are not too sympathetic toward civilians who carry illegal firearms, especially high capacity semi-automatics. It's not a good idea to tell a judge, "Well your honor, he tried to rob me, so I shot him eighteen times."

If you have a permit to carry a handgun, you can opt to carry any size you wish. Many persons who are licensed to carry a concealed firearm carry large ones which are deliberately difficult to conceal. This is usually done for the deterrent value of it being seen (or partially seen) by a potential aggressor. Few assailants will take the chance of assaulting someone with a large and visible bulge under their clothing which is obviously a weapon.

If you don't have the luxury or inclination of obviously carrying a concealed weapon, you will want to select one which really can be concealed. There is a wide selection of small size .22 caliber handguns on the market. One of my favorite handguns for years has been a small Iver Johnson .22 semi-automatic. (See Figure 9-1.) This gun holds seven rounds, is very reliable and reasonably accurate at short distances. Best of all, it is very easy to conceal on my person (including the belt and shoulder holster) and fits comfortably in the pocket of almost anything I wear. This is not the only handgun I own, but it is the one I carry most often. Because it is both small and flat (flat being a major advantage over revolvers) it is virtually undetectable. There have even been instances when I have been patted down and it was not discovered. There are many instances when I choose to carry this weapon for business purposes when a larger and more visible weapon would be offensive or inappropriate. Just because you need to be armed does not mean the entire world needs to know about it.



Figure 9-1

Shooting form with Iver Johnson .22

The skill to wield a handgun accurately and effectively depends upon training and experience.

On the other hand, when I know it is going to be a particularly challenging day, I choose a different firearm. On these occasions,

I like to carry a Glock 9mm with an eighteen round clip. (See Figure 9-3.) This gun is large and intended for purposes other than easy concealment. There are hundreds of different guns available on the market and your choice should be based on individual preference and the purpose you intend it for. If personal defense is your purpose, thinking small may well be the best way to go.

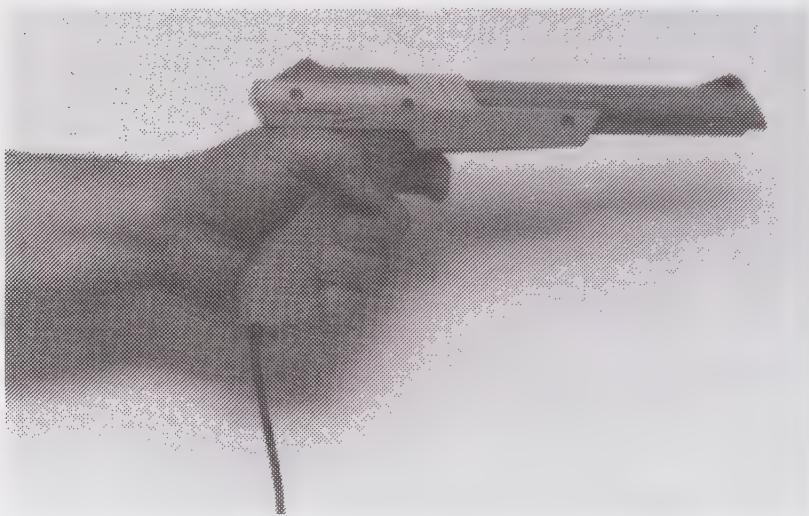


Figure 9-2

Shooting form with TV Light Gun

Although nothing surpasses real life practice, TV video games using light guns are an excellent means to develop form and accuracy.

In recent years there have been major political battles regarding private ownership of firearms. Increased regulation and tighter licensing requirements have been the trend. The primary intention of this policy has been to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals or dangerous and unstable persons. Despite the best of intentions, what actually happens is that criminals get their guns anyway and many law abiding citizens find it more difficult. In different places that I have lived, there has always been a black market in firearms. I'm not talking

about a black market for criminals and the like. There were always respectable people who were selling firearms to other respectable people (being respectable does not preclude being willing to violate the law). Some of these guns were from stolen shipments, others were legally purchased in other states and others were purchased legally and reported stolen. These were usually new weapons which had never been used. There are many people who make a lucrative (and equally risky and illegal) business in this fashion. If you are determined to find a gun, you most probably will. Do not fail to keep in mind that the illegal possession of a stolen or hot firearm represents a major criminal liability for you. This liability greatly increases if the weapon in question was involved in a crime before you came to possess it. The crime it was previously involved in, can be the fact that it was stolen.

Long arms such as rifles and shotguns are typically easier to possess in many jurisdictions but fall into a category other than a personal defense weapon for most applications. The mere fact that they are not very portable, concealable or realistic to carry with you most of the time rules them out for this purpose. For personal defense against violent street crime, a long arm of any sort is not even a consideration. A single shot .22 caliber derringer would be of more practical value for personal defense than would a high capacity assault weapon.

Accuracy with any handgun is important. Accuracy comes from continued practice under simulated real-life conditions. Shooting at an assailant is considerably more difficult than shooting at a paper target. Practicing with one handgun does not make you an expert with another. You must be familiar with the weapon you are depending on. Until you experience the actual feel of shooting your handgun, you are unable to safely predict how it will respond to you. Every weapon handles differently.

There are some basics of handgun shooting which are quite convenient to acquire. For defensive situations, much handgun shooting is done at close range and often without using the sights. This method is typically referred to as instinctive shooting. The gun serves as an extension of your hand and you simply learn to point where you

want to shoot. This is not as simple as it sounds but there are several good ways to help master this ability.

My son has a Nintendo set which came with a light gun. The gun resembles a German Luger design and is actually quite realistic in terms of its grip and feel. One just needs to ignore the fact that it is feather light and made out of orange colored plastic and is affixed to the end of a ten foot wire. Aside from these minor differences, it is a pretty decent simulation. There are a number of game cartridges which use the light gun and can provide good practice if not interesting stimulation. If you can learn to shoot accurately and quickly enough with one of these light guns, you can emerge as a decent instinctive shooter with a real gun. If you are unable to shoot out all of the balloons on this TV game with a toy gun, you clearly don't have the expertise and right to be carrying a real handgun. Using these video games is an excellent way to compliment your shooting skills. You will still need to practice with real ammo and a real weapon but this can still vastly improve your accuracy. (See Figure 9-2.)



Figure 9-3

Shooting form with Glock 9mm

Note the consistency in the grip and posture in Figures 9-1, 9-2, and 9-3.

Realistic and practical concealment of a handgun is considerably more difficult than it would appear on television. I am always amazed an actor who is short and fat manages to pull out a pistol with a twelve inch barrel from under his jacket. Especially when there was no visible bulge to begin with. It is equally as absurd when you see the bad guy trotting around with a large semi-automatic tucked into his pants. He can jump over tall buildings yet his gun never falls out or down his pants leg, as would happen in real life.

Another unrealistic position for concealed carry often shown is in the back of your pants, over the crack of your butt. This may be a possibility only if you never, ever plan to sit down. If you do manage to sit down, it will hurt like hell. When you get back up, it is guaranteed that the gun will no longer be where you wanted it to be. Most people cannot afford such a limitation.

Ankle holsters appear to provide a good degree of concealment. The problem here is access. Dropping down on one knee to remove it is an awkward and time consuming movement. Before you can get the gun into your hand and take aim, there are too many preliminary steps involved. Granted, there are times when you may not have the option for concealment elsewhere and ankle carry can be an asset. The paramount disadvantage is that you will never be able to withdraw your weapon quickly or without being seen doing so.

There are more civilians out there who legally carry handguns than you would think. Based on the nature of their profession and personal circumstance, these people have the legal right to carry a concealed firearm. Civilians in this category tend to be some of the best masters of truly concealed carry. These are the people who need to protect themselves while, at the same time, insuring that being observed with a weapon doesn't cause more trouble. Even with a legal permit to carry a weapon, the police will always react very defensively (and rightly so) when any civilian is spotted with a weapon. The automatic presumption about anyone carrying a gun is that they are either the police or a criminal. You don't want to get hassled and possibly shot just because someone saw the concealed weapon you have the right to carry.

Recognizing the responsibility that goes along with carrying a firearm, as well as the potential risks, caution should always be exercised. I am a licensed private investigator and have a permit to carry a concealed firearm. In the years that I have carried a handgun with me, I have never had a problem of it being observed or detected. I walked in and out of a variety of places with an abundance of trained law enforcement personnel around. They would immediately spot and stop anyone who was suspected of having a weapon on them, even if it turned out to be a legal one. My weapon was concealed well, there was nothing for them to ever detect on me. Not everyone who carries a weapon has the luxury of a badge to flash for instant recognition. It can be a lot more cumbersome for a civilian to prove that they are in fact legal.

Your own particular body type has a lot to do with the variety of concealed carry which will work best for you. Tall and thin as opposed to short and squat each require different considerations. For most people and occasions, shoulder holsters are not all that convenient. The initial hurdle is that you have to wear a jacket all of the time. The second factor is that they tend to be obvious on most people. In almost all situations, eye contact with other people involves looking predominately at the upper portion of their body. You tend to notice faces more than you do feet. You will more often notice the color of their shirt than of their pants. A handgun concealed on the upper portion of your torso is within the range of more frequent observation. Even if it is not obvious in itself, it will still be more commonly observed.

A belt holster is typically the preferred way to go. It is compatible with a variety of styles of dress. This can include either a jacket, vest or even an unbuttoned shirt worn outside of the pants. The convenience of being able to dress formally or casually is a major advantage. With the right style of holster for your weapon, concealment on your side or slightly back of it is possible. In conjunction with the right clothing, this can be the most concealable yet convenient position for carrying a weapon. From this position it will always be within convenient reach while secure from detection. It will not bounce around with any type of physical activity, nor is it likely to ever fall out. Some of the tricks for added concealment with this

carry style include using your arm and elbow as a cover. Locking your arm on your side right over the weapon will prevent your shirt or jacket from blowing open and revealing what is underneath. Standing with your arms clasped in front of you will completely cover any view of your weapon. To look as natural as possible, you could simply carry a newspaper or book under your arm to achieve the same result. A small prop like a newspaper can insure totally discreet concealed carry. (See Figure 9-4.)



Figure 9-4

Weapon Concealment

Adequate concealment is a factor for the carrying of almost any weapon. If you can't conveniently hide it, the odds are that you won't be able to carry it. Successful concealment depends upon taking advantage of your natural environment and lifestyle. This means that any weapon you select is capable of blending in with your routine and daily life. Wearing a heavy coat when it is summertime just to conceal a weapon is obviously counterproductive. Illustrated is the simplicity by which a simple clipboard (newspaper, purse or grocery bag) can conceal otherwise obvious weapons.

The next time you are in a crowd, look around carefully. There are more people carrying well concealed weapons that you would think.

Chapter 10

Steel Capped Shoes

I'm sure by now you realize that a good personal defense weapon does not necessarily have to be an object that most folks consider a weapon.

Your shoes can be a very effective and powerful weapon.

Steel capped shoes and boots are a common staple of the construction and heavy industry business. Being able to protect one's feet from hundreds of pounds of weight in an accident is sufficient grounds alone for wearing them. I wear a pair of steel capped boots whenever I do any firewood cutting. On many an occasion, a heavy log has rolled or fallen against my boots while I am wielding the chain saw. If my feet were not protected, I would risk serious foot injury as well as whatever may happen if I were to drop the saw. I've always found it amazing that I could drop a small boulder on top of my foot and not feel anything.

Moving away from the more customary use of steel capped shoes, a major feature they also offer is for personal defense. If a log falling on your foot does not cause you any injury, imagine if you were to use this protective feature as a kicking defense.

What happens when you kick something, especially something which is as hard or harder than your foot? Usually, you will limp away with a sore or injured foot. But what if your foot is protected by a steel cage? You will be able to kick with an amazing degree of strength and sustain no harm or injury to yourself. Did you ever kick something with the tip of your foot and immediately realize

that you hurt yourself more than whatever you were kicking? Steel capped shoes can give you the potent kicking power of a practiced martial artist (though clearly not the skill or proficiency.)

Most martial arts schools conduct kicking practice and training with bare feet. This is an excellent way to enhance conditioning and to cultivate form and skill. The major disadvantage of this approach is the length of time and discomfort involved in learning to be proficient. There are some martial artists who can break bricks with their hands, there are even more brick masons who break bricks on a daily basis using a hammer. If you had the choice, would you rather use your own flesh or use a hardened tool?

Steel capped shoes can give you this advantage in an easy and quick manner. When taking advantage of this defensive resource, you can always be ready and prepared to deliver a lethal and potent kick. If you should have any doubt as to how effective these shoes can be when used defensively, you may want to experiment as follows. Find yourself a solid object to kick at, an old car body, an old barn, a wooden door or even a sheet of plywood. While wearing the steel capped shoes, kick the object as hard as you can using the tip (toe) area of your foot. Kick the same object again while wearing your favorite regular shoes, sneakers, etc. Which kick made the biggest dent? Which kick caused your foot the most pain? Which would you be the most afraid of being kicked by?

You should be aware that not all steel capped shoes and boots look like they were designed for heavy industrial use. There are some made as dress shoes, as well as casual walking boots. From the outside they look like regular shoes. The boot version offers the added advantage of providing ankle support, which can be an important asset for someone who is not an expert at kicking.

If you need to be prepared for personal defense and want a weapon with you other than your own wits, steel capped shoes are an excellent choice. This is one of the ideal weapons which you can have with you at all times and without taking any risk in having it. Did you ever hear of anyone being arrested for wearing steel capped boots?

Do you want to be prepared whenever you go out? Do you go many places without wearing shoes? Steel capped shoes or boots

can be available for your use at any time. Aside from airport metal detectors, no one will probably ever know that they are not regular shoes. Imagine the surprise when you kick someone with them! They are very effective as a defensive weapon, are easy to use, and it is next to impossible for anyone to disarm you. With minimal practice and training, you can learn to use them in a very efficient manner. If you have the benefit of martial arts training in kicking, the wearing of steel capped shoes will make you a formidable adversary.

Chapter 11

Martial Arts Weapons

The current media popularity of martial arts weapons helps contribute to their reputation for being fearsome, lethal and effective. All of the reputable martial arts magazines carry advertisements for many of these exotic looking devices. We are shown movies where an axe blade on a stick is used to annihilate an entire gang of trained fighters. We are told that these weapons have been around for thousands of years and have survived the test of time. If they were not effective weapons, why would they still be in use? Why would there still be schools to provide training in their use?

The reality is that they are indeed effective weapons but from a different time and for different purposes. In a time before the advent of modern firearms, martial arts weapons represented the state of the art. Major wars were won and conquests made based solely on these weapons. The geographic boundaries of nations were determined by the strength of swords and the expertise of fighters with sticks.

For the thousands of martial arts weapons which are purchased each year, only a small fraction fall into the hands of someone with the training to use them effectively. The reason this occurs is that most people don't want or can't afford to invest the time it takes to master these skills. If there are other things in life you like doing, being a martial arts master is probably not in your destiny. I have personally studied various martial arts on an occasional basis for many years. Although I have learned a lot, I will never be the master of anything without making a commitment of time and practice that I am unwilling to do.

With a moderate degree of practice, the training with various martial arts weapons can be of significant value for personal defense. One of the major principles of many martial art disciplines is that almost anything can be effectively used as a defensive weapon. The mere focus on the more typical martial arts weapons is usually of no more practical value than studying how to use a black powder musket for personal protection. The training and familiarity with using almost any weapon system is of considerably more value than is the weapon itself. The recent popularity of martial arts films has contributed to the illegality of many of these weapons. Being a master of a weapon system which is illegal to possess and impractical to use is of minimal advantage for personal protection purposes.



Figures 11-1

Sickle Form

Unless you are willing to make this significant investment of time and effort, such exotic weapons are relatively useless for personal defense.

The plethora of martial arts magazines on the market carry scores of advertisements for exotic weapons. The majority of these are legal to purchase since they are intended for display purposes, not as actual weapons. These weapons instill a sense of fantasy of times long past. There is no question that they can still prove effective for modern day defense under certain circumstances. The real question is, can you realistically afford to carry any of these items with you and will they be of any help against what is being used against you? (See Figure 11-1.)

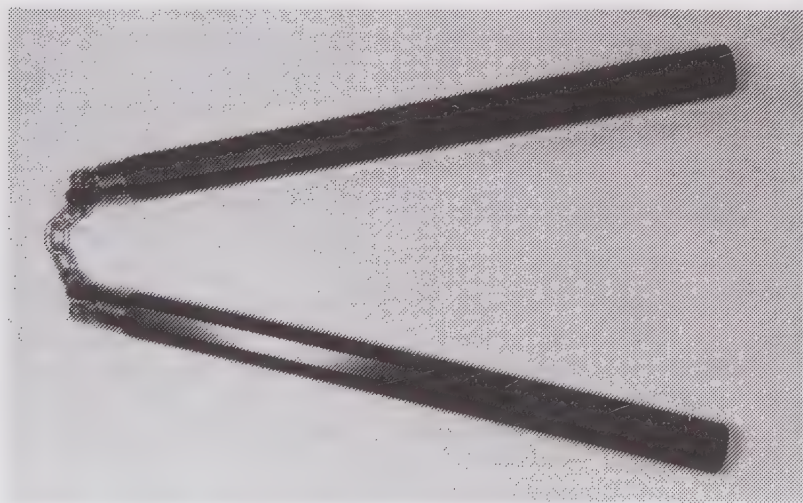


Figure 11-2

Nunchaku

A favorite on the streets yet of dubious practical value without considerable training and practice.

There are some modern day adaptations of martial arts weapons for modern day defense. The vast majority tend to be no more than

a marketing hype. There are small devices to attach to your key ring which you can punch with. Also included are telescoping night sticks to strike out with. Any items of this variety can be of potential value if the user has acquired sufficient skill in its use. The same principle applies to almost any object. You can do equally well with just a plain key ring or hairbrush handle. If personal defense is your primary consideration, most martial arts weapons will provide you with little other than training and exercise. Few are practical items to carry with you.

Back in the early 1970s when Kung Fu movies were beginning to flood the market, the Nunchaku was introduced to the American population (see Figure 11-2). I was working with an inner city police department at the time and this item became the favorite of every street gang. They all aspired to look like Bruce Lee and decimate their opponents. Most of the Nunchakus they carried were homemade and consisted of nothing more than two short pieces of broom handle tied together with a piece of rope. It was almost like a badge of toughness for them to walk around with one in their back pockets. This was probably the best place to keep a homemade Nunchaku, since it was of little practical use elsewhere.

This was a perfect example of the delusion that a weapon alone makes you tough. None of these intimidating characters had the skill to effectively wield the homemade Nunchaku, and even if they could, it was made so poorly that it would be useless. Despite the obvious, thousands of young teenagers tried to look intimidating by carrying a useless weapon.

There are few true weapons from the martial arts realm which are practical for personal defense in today's world. It is not that they lack lethal potential in the hands of an expert skilled in their use. Rather, the inability to carry it with you is the most common disadvantage. This disadvantage should not negate your taking professional training in the use of any martial arts weapon. The skills of self defense are highly transferrable. The broader your mastery of any skill, the more likely you are to survive any encounter. What you are learning is the skill of application, timing and fortitude. The actual object you use is of less importance than the skill and experience.

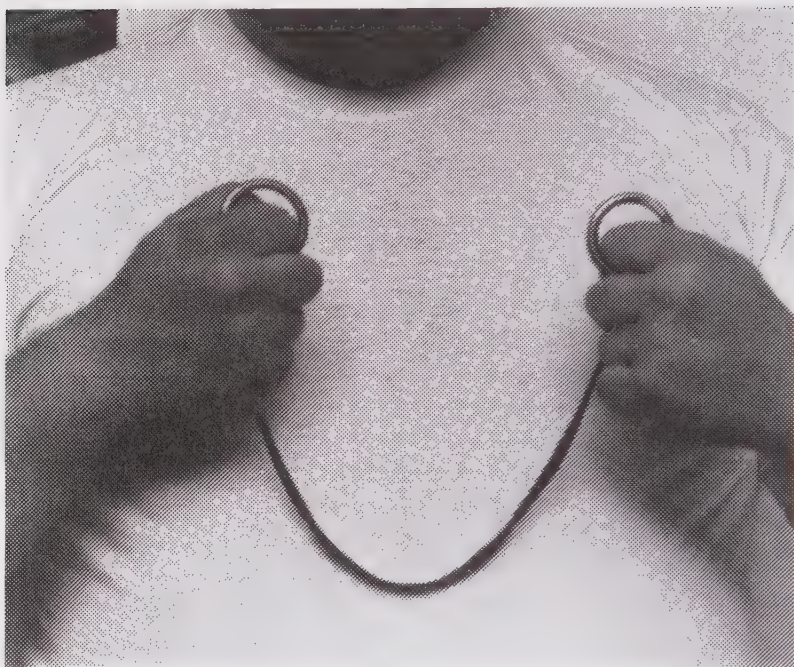
Chapter 12

Garotte

The garotte is another centuries-old weapon whose use is perhaps best typified by the activities of the Thuggee cult of India. It was primarily a weapon used for the strangulation of a victim prior to robbing them. Its design has varied amongst different places and cultures but is commonly a rope, cord, sash or wire of about two to three feet in length. Each end is usually affixed with something to grip, which can be a knot, a ring or some similar item. In a manner of speaking, it was the original restraint device. It makes handcuffs and thumbscrews look like children's toys. (See Figure 12-1 on page 70.)

For personal defense, a garotte can serve another important purpose. Having the ability to strangle someone is clearly not what is being proposed, for the most obvious of reasons. Being able to effectively restrain an adversary is an important consideration and where a garotte can be well applied.

After successful physical encounters with an adversary, the problem often remains as to how you can render them incapable of doing you further harm. Perhaps someone tried to assault you with a weapon and you managed to disarm them. What do you do next to prevent them from trying again? Do you try to flee and run the risk of them coming after you? Do you want to take their life to insure your own safety? Do you try to reason with them and hope they have learned their lesson? How do you safely get away to summon the police?



Figures 12-1

Garotte

A garotte is both small and concealable yet highly utilitarian.

There is no convenient or practical answer to any of the above questions. The need you may be faced with is having to restrain the violent aggressor to prevent them from doing you any further harm and to allow yourself the opportunity to escape. A garotte type implement can be an excellent tool for such restraining purposes. A short length of steel wire attached to a key ring at either end is a very effective implement for this purpose. It can give you the ability to hold someone at bay until the authorities or other help can arrive, or allow you to restrain them so that you may flee. (See Figure 12-2.) It is a very tiring and difficult proposition to restrain someone for an extended period of time with your hands only. Sooner

or later you will tire and they will be free to get away or to do you even further harm. If that adversary had a steel wire painfully wrapped around their neck, hands or whatever, it is unlikely that they would be willing or able to put up much of a struggle. If their hands were bound behind their back with a tightly wrapped wire, there is little further harm they could do to you.



Figure 12-2

Garotte as a Restraint Device

It can be effective in restraining an assailant and rendering them harmless.

When used in this fashion, the garotte serves much the same purpose as a pair of handcuffs. Recognizing that it is not very practical or even legal for most persons to walk about with handcuffs in their possession on a daily basis, the garotte provides a practical alternative. Still, it may prove worthwhile to carry a handcuff key taped to the inside back of your belt. A small piece of duct tape will hold it there securely. Should you ever be criminally and forcibly restrained, your means of escape will be right near your fingertips. There are only about three major key types which fit nearly all handcuffs.

It is somewhat suspicious for the average person to be carrying handcuffs or thumbscrews but hardly questionable if you carry a short string or wire attached to a key ring. A garotte is very small, making it very portable, concealable and an ideal defensive tool you can have with you all of the time without giving the appearance of being armed.

In any defensive situation, having options and alternatives to insure your personal safety is important. Once you have disarmed, disabled or otherwise halted a dangerous assailant from harming you, being able to further restrain them can be an important consideration for your continued safety. Because of the convenience a garotte type implement offers, there is little reason not to be prepared.

Some of the more practical and simple types of garotte can be a short length of steel wire or nylon cord attached at both ends to house keys, key rings or metal washers. Nylon cord which has a high tensile strength is as effective as solid or braided steel wire. Both materials offer the feature that the more resistance you exert against it, the more it hurts. When properly applied, the most violent of aggressors can be adequately restrained. It doesn't require a big rope to tie up a big person's hands. A convenient over-the-counter version is available in many camping/sporting goods stores. This is a portable, pocket wood saw which is nothing more than a thin flexible cutting chain affixed between two rings.

The garotte is easy to carry and you never know when it may come in handy. This is a classic case of a centuries-old weapon having a modern day application.

Chapter 13

Walking Sticks, Nightsticks and Canes

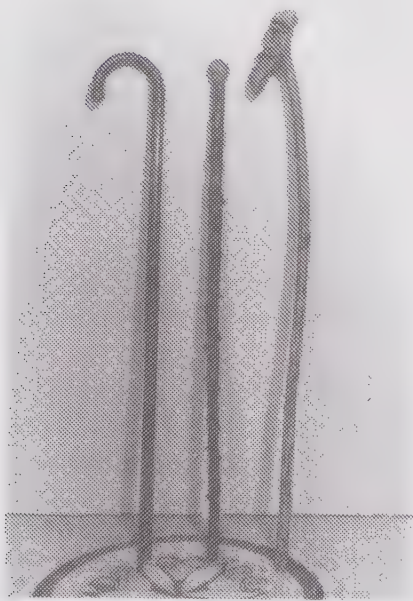


Figure 13-1

Canes & Walking Sticks

In the not too distant past, gentlemen routinely carried a walking stick when heading outside. It was carried as a defensive instrument, not as a device for the infirm. A walking stick or cane is an ideal defensive weapon if you can be socially justified in carrying one.

Mankind has used sticks of all forms for defense and offense since the beginning of time. The common denominator of all weapons in this category is that wood and lately, certain plastics, make for an excellent weapon because of their light weight, durability and resilience to impact. A gentlemen's walking stick, a Chinese bo staff and a 2 X 4 all share these virtues. The overall shape and length of the item may differ, as will its method of application.

In medieval times, the quarter staff (6 feet or more in length) was an excellent defensive weapon by virtue of its length and heft. It was typically wielded outdoors in open spaces and could be used effectively against a host of weapons including the sword and mace (the kind of mace you swing, not spray). As civilization and population density grew, the practical utility of this weapon diminished. In more crowded, indoor and urban areas there was just not sufficient room to use a weapon of this length. Much as the quarter staff and bo staff remain formidable weapons in their own right, they are just not very practical by modern day standards. If most of your time is spent in desolate areas or on lonely country roads, you might well consider such a weapon. If your environment is more urban and/or business oriented, a six foot stick will pose more of a problem than it will solve.

The next variety in order of size would be a cane or short walking stick. It was not all that long ago that it was fashionable for gentlemen to routinely have one with them whenever venturing outside. The social acceptance of this has changed over the decades and canes are most often utilized either by the elderly or the disabled. Your average twenty-two-year-old walking down the street in a typical city with a cane in hand would likely be regarded as someone looking for trouble. But your chances of apprehension diminish greatly should you happen to have a visible limp. If you can reasonably justify walking with a cane, take full advantage of the opportunity, for it can indeed be a very effective and powerful defensive weapon. Any weapon which can extend your striking reach by several feet gives you a major advantage against an adversary. There are two primary shapes that walking canes typically come in. There are those with a right angled grip, rounded top and those with a hooked grip. The

curved variety reveals itself as the better defensive weapon because it can be used not only to strike out with, but to hook and pull inward as well. Any style can be effective if wielded properly.

The overall mass and weight of any cane or walking stick is an important consideration in how it is used. You may be able to hit someone squarely over the head with a cane and fail to knock them out or even down. A cane just does not have enough heft to necessarily accomplish this. Rather than attempt ineffective blows, apply the cane so as to take advantage of its strengths. Jabbing and blocking are two preferred moves. The tip of a cane can focus a lot of energy and impact into a small area. Maximum efficiency from any light weight striking weapon requires that blows be directed to vulnerable and softer parts of the body. It should serve as an extension of your energy and leverage, not as a force of its own.

A person with a cane possesses more of a defensive asset than a liability. Just because you may lean on it while walking does not take away from its effectiveness when used as a defensive tool. If you can plausibly get away with carrying a cane, you should by all means do so. It may even be worth mimicking a limp to justify doing so. It is one of the few socially acceptable weapons (so long as no one knows why you carry it).

The police nightstick is a weapon familiar to almost everyone. Its origins can be traced back to many martial arts weapons, including the Philippine escrima stick and the Okinawan Tonfa. Even the cave man had his club!

The escrima stick is almost identical to the present day nightstick with the primary difference being its method of use, which typically involves wielding one stick in each hand. A wooden stick of from 18 to 28 inches is the usual form for this close range weapon. Many police departments have adopted a longer version (typically 36 inches in length), which has become known as a riot stick. The longer version is commonly wielded with two hands on opposite ends and provides the advantage of extended reach and the option to push back against an adversary as opposed to striking them. Either variety can be effective if properly used but is still inferior to a newer version copied after the Tonfa.

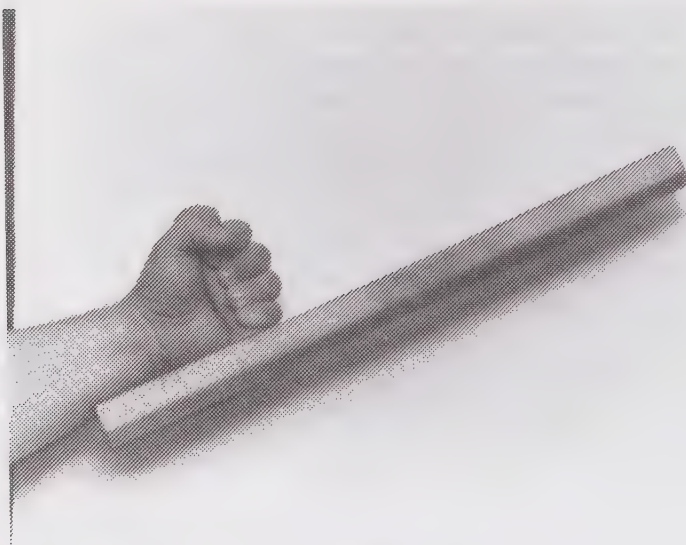


Figure 13-2

Tonfa

The predecessor of the modern day variety of nightstick currently carried by many police departments. As effective in blocking and striking as it is in subduing and restraining. A centuries old classic which has only gotten better.

The Tonfa was originally used as the handle for a millstone and was modified to serve as a fighting tool by attaching a short grip at a right angle to it (see Figure 13-2). The added grip is what makes this weapon so unique and effective. Being able to pivot the stick in a variety of directions makes it very capable of both striking and blocking. Many police departments in the United States have in recent years adopted this variety of nightstick as standard equipment for their officers. One significant disadvantage of the police version is that the stick is completely round, as opposed to the oriental design, which is flat on one side. The major advantage of one flat side to the stick is that it can better rest against your forearm for blocking purposes. This will enable you to hold it more steadily and absorb more of the impact without pain or injury. The completely rounded

version is considered to be more effective for striking. The use of this type of weapon (its modern day variety) has evolved as a fighting art on its own. There are rigorous training requirements for its use and certification for students and instructors. Some proponents of the new variety claim that it is an entirely new weapon and has little in common with the older Tonfa: other than its construction, size and method of use. Either style is a very effective and potentially lethal weapon. It is equally effective in both defensive and offensive encounters. A reasonable degree of training is required to take full advantage of this capability. There is no question that the newer version nightstick (with the side grip) is a superior weapon to the older police version (a straight stick), but I can't help regretting the loss of a thong. This was a terrific asset in maintaining control over your weapon and insuring that it was never removed from, nor fell from your hand. Remember the image of a cop walking his beat while twirling his nightstick. This was an art in itself, too.

Chapter 14

Miscellaneous Defensive Items

Almost any item can effectively and successfully be used as a personal defense weapon. The range of options is limited only by your imagination and the resources available to you. What follows is an assortment of some of the possibilities. You should improvise to suit your personal needs.

Police-type Flashlights

These are very common these days, with significantly more civilians possessing them than do police. A major feature of their design is a heavy aluminum body which provides weight and impact resistance. There is a wide range of models using from two to six “C” or “D” cell batteries. The larger the battery size and quantity, the more weight the flashlight will have. The use of these lights as a defensive tool is very similar to that of a nightstick and both share similar advantages. The most important asset of having one of these flashlights with you is that its primary purpose is that of a flashlight, not as a weapon. There is nothing overtly or covertly illegal or suspicious about someone possessing a flashlight. It is a major advantage when an item as innocent as a mere flashlight can also be used as a very effective personal defensive weapon. Although the good models made out of metal are not inexpensive, they are indeed indestructible and can last almost forever. I have owned one for more than ten years and have put

it to every conceivable application and use without problem. It has been both an excellent flashlight and an excellent defensive weapon.

There is one modification you can make to any police flashlight which can make it even more effective in a defensive situation. Attach an eyelet to the butt end of the light and add a thong or strap to it. This simple modification will provide two major advantages in any defense situation. The thong wrapped around your wrist will enable you to maintain a better hold on the light and prevent you from dropping it even if you let go. The small eyelet on the end makes an excellent addition to jab and strike with. This small protrusion on the end can inflict significantly more pain to an adversary than a similar flashlight without this addition. This small modification which will cost you less than one dollar will enhance the defensive capabilities several fold.

Cigarette Lighters and Matches

These are basic items which many people will have in their pockets anyway. Even a non-smoker might do well to consider carrying either one. Many inexpensive disposable lighters can easily be adjusted to operate like a miniature blow torch. Holding a lighter with a twelve-inch flame toward the face of someone who is trying to rob or assault you will go far in helping them change their mind. It is just too easy not to take advantage of having this resource available to you. It is small, lightweight and legal. You really can't ask for anything more simple yet effective. If you can find stick matches that you can strike on anything (white tips), carry a few with you. Even regular kitchen stick matches are as effective, but less convenient. They are all next to impossible to extinguish during the first few seconds after igniting. Next time someone confronts you in an assaultive manner, act nervous and begin to light up a cigarette. At the last moment, light up your adversary's face instead. Lunge forward with the tip of the just ignited match stick and wait for the screams. Everyone carries matches with them, don't they? Nobody's ever been stopped by a cop who said, "Hey you, buddy, the guy with the matches in his pocket, freeze or I'll shoot."

Pens and Pencils

Yes, I mean the average type of ball point pen and mechanical pencil familiar to us all. Almost everyone carries one in their pocket for writing. There is nothing the least bit suspicious about doing so. You too should always carry one, but for personal defense purposes. A simple writing instrument can be used in much the same way as a knife, and does not represent any degree of legal liability just for possessing it. There are several all metal models on the market which are the ideal type for this purpose. Even a solidly made plastic body pen/pencil is more than ample for the task. A metal point in a solid casing makes for a potentially lethal defensive tool. When the power of the pen is referred to, most people don't think of being stabbed with one. You can carry it with you all of the time and no one will be the wiser until such time as you need to defend yourself with it.

Electric Zappers

These are fairly new on the market and are billed as being the ideal defensive tool. Essentially, these are just a derivation of the "cattle prods" long popular with both ranchers and police. The two major types are those which shoot a projectile and send the current through a wire and those which entail touching an adversary with the device. My experience with these items is limited, but I will admit that seeing a blue spark jumping out of one of these weapons is a scary sight. I have never witnessed someone being disabled with any of these, but I have seen those who were scared away by one. If it is legal for you to carry and you are skilled and comfortable with wielding this type of weapon, then by all means give it a try. If your life is indeed on the line, make sure the battery is always charged and that the model you purchase is really capable of penetrating clothing of all types. A fairly simple variety can be constructed at home using nothing more than a small lantern battery and a step up transformer. The power transformer from almost any 120 volt

appliance will serve the purpose and needs only to be wired in reverse. A momentary contact switch and two isolated prongs on the end of a shaft are the only additional requirements. This is a child's toy to make for anyone with rudimentary electrical know how.

Slingshots

Slingshots are typically thought of as children's toys and usually underrated as a weapon. Some of the models on the market today are high powered. There are even some which fold up to make them highly concealable. The rubber straps come in various strengths and they even make specialized ammo. A half inch or larger ball bearing is pretty much a standard and is a lethally effective projectile. When fired from a commercial high powered slingshot, this ball bearing can travel a significant distance with considerable power and accuracy. A shot to the head with one can kill and a hit anywhere else can be extremely painful. Even if it looks like one, a good slingshot is no child's toy. An adolescent walking around with a slingshot in his back pocket will look more like an aspiring delinquent than an armed assailant. An adult who is carrying one will look like an aspiring adolescent. An age old child's toy may be more practical and efficient than you may think. Almost no one takes a slingshot seriously until they get shot with one.

Brass knuckles

Brass knuckles are another favorite of our historic gangster tradition. From the turn of the century days of brawling street gangs, brass knuckles have long been a mainstay of weaponry. Similar to the blackjack or any other small striking instrument, its purpose is to increase the power of a blow with your hand. Punching someone can be as painful to the person delivering the blow as it is to the one on the receiving end. If you are going to hit someone, you should strive to do it with something harder and more resilient than flesh and bones. If your life and safety depend on striking an effective blow to an assailant, you need to insure that you are not disabled

after the first blow. Brass knuckles are an excellent tool to enhance the potency of your punch and to avoid crippled fingers and bleeding knuckles. Just like kicking with steel capped shoes, your hands are protected by a metal shield. You can deliver considerably more power with any punch because your hand is not absorbing the direct impact. A punch to the head with brass knuckles can be lethal and a blow to other parts of the body will invariably do some bone breaking or cause internal injuries.

Brass knuckles are not legal anywhere, to the best of my knowledge. It is considered a gangster type of assaultive weapon and anyone possessing brass knuckles is viewed as having criminal intent. It is not the type of weapon that good guys are typically expected to carry. It is equally the type of weapon that you will probably never convince the police or the courts that you carry only for the most noble of intentions — self-defense. Despite its excellent effectiveness as a defensive weapon, the potential liabilities for using or carrying one may outweigh this advantage.

As with any other weapon, you need to make your own decisions and choices and live with them. If brass knuckles seem appropriate for your needs, finding one will not be all that difficult. You won't find them in your local department store or gun shop, but there are realistic working replicas on the market. These are sold as imitation brass knuckles and come disguised as belt buckles or paper weights. With the simple filing off of a little hook or a small base, they are real brass knuckles. As if the manufacturers didn't know people would be doing this!

Additionally, there are some practical and convenient items which can replicate the function of brass knuckles. One of the favored ways to cover your hand with hard metal protection is with a "C" link. This is the type of link used to attach chain or rope and is oval in shape with a fitting on one side. They come in a wide range of sizes including those that will perfectly wrap around your fingers. It may not be as secure and form fitting as professionally milled brass knuckles but it can be just as effective. The biggest advantage is that this is a totally innocent and harmless looking item. Attach your keys to it and no one will be the wiser. People carry more bizarre key rings all the time anyway. (See Figure 14-1.)



Figure 14-1

Improvised Brass Knuckles

The only limit for improvised weapons is your imagination. A simple clamp used to hold your keys can be as potent and effective as a pair of brass knuckles.

Bow and Arrow

This is another weapon from times long past which has survived the test of time. A bow clearly does not qualify as a concealable weapon but it remains one of the all time best for home defense purposes. The fact that archery is favorably regarded as a sport enables the convenient purchase and possession of such equipment. A major advantage of a bow and arrow is that it has reusable ammunition. When you fire a bullet from a gun, it is a one time affair. When you shoot an arrow, most of the time you can reuse it, over and over again. Granted, shooting a bow accurately does require a good degree of practice and skill. Once this mastery is obtained, you have an accurate and powerful weapon. Drawing an arrow back in the

face of an assailant will instill terror in their hearts. People become accustomed to being faced with more conventional weapons and are terrorized when faced with the bizarre or unusual. In a defensive situation, a bow and arrow is definitely the unusual. We have all seen enough TV shows with people being impaled with arrows to dread this ever happening to ourselves.

For defensive purposes, hunting-tipped arrows are the most lethal. There are many different varieties which share the common trait of having some sort of barbed tip. Once they go in, they will not easily come out. There are even some varieties of arrows made out of glass tubing which will shatter upon impact. The entire shaft breaks off except for the portion which penetrated your target. Nothing like a wound with ground glass in it.

Compound bows are an improvement second to none for this type of weapon. The pulley system not only provides you with additional power but enables you to draw it back and hold it easily while taking aim. This difference may not mean much to you until you have tried both varieties. A less experienced archer can learn to be much more accurate in less time with a compound bow.

For those of you who prefer the feel of a trigger and a fully cocked weapon, the crossbow is an excellent alternative. Power and accuracy are unsurpassed with the only tradeoff being the additional time required to reload. Crossbows can also be conveniently purchased over-the-counter. They even manufacture some miniature models which can approach a reasonable degree of concealment.

Human beings are creative when it comes to carrying weapons. Sometimes this creativity is more obvious than others. How many times have you seen young gangs walking around with baseball bats or golf clubs? Sure, they are just on their way to tee off. Who would suspect anything else? They are boldly advertising what they are prepared for.

How about those people who walk around with a concealed weapon? A concealed weapon which they are skilled with using should they have to?

Which should you be more afraid of? The known or the unknown?

Millions of people are heading out every morning with some type of weapon on them. The vast majority are ordinary, law abiding citizens like yourself. What these people all have in common is the desire to be prepared and to feel the confidence and security of being prepared to defend themselves should the need arise. These people range from the grandmotherly type with the four inch hat-pin to the salesman with a revolver in his glove compartment. The clerk who carries a small pocketknife and the secretary with tear gas in her possession are both trying to be prepared. Each one has made the choice of selecting a weapon for their personal defense. Some people opt to carry a length of chain in their pocket and still others may prefer an object resembling an ice pick.

Like the people mentioned above, use your imagination to best suit your needs. Even the most common of items such as fishing hooks and razor blades can work wonders when properly applied. I used to carry a single edge razor blade in my wallet as a backup. Next time someone tries to rob you and asks you to hand over your money, be sure to put the razor blade in (through) their hand.

Several years ago, I knew someone who had a delivery route which routinely brought him to some high crime neighborhoods where robbery and assault was a daily fact of life. His company would not allow him to carry, much less use a weapon. Bad for the corporate image, you know. While on his route, he carried a folding clipboard containing the order forms and other paperwork. One day the idea crossed his mind that this could be converted into a good defensive weapon, one that his company couldn't possibly object to. He went to a steel fabricating shop and had an identically sized clipboard made out of sheet steel. It looked like any other conventional folding aluminum clipboard except this one was made out of solid steel and weighed close to ten pounds. It was capable of deflecting a blow from a knife and knocking someone out cold. It was an innocent looking item which he could carry with him all of the time and was capable of use for personal defense.

Whether it is a gun, knife, stick or even some black pepper to blow into someone's eyes, it is still a weapon none the less. With imagination, everyone can find something to effectively serve this purpose.

Chapter 15

Your Mind And Body As A Weapon

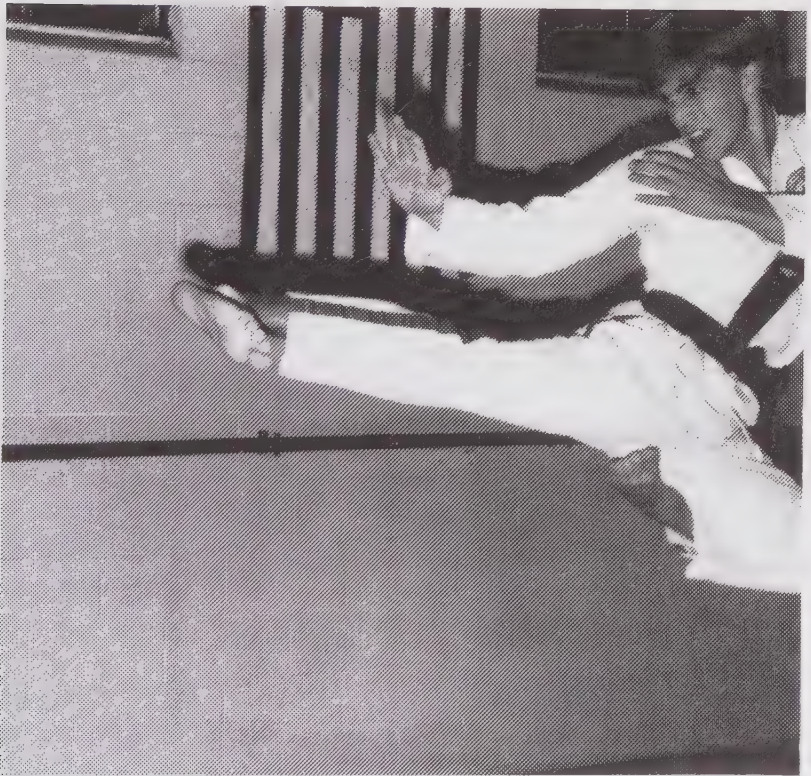


Figure 15-1
Martial Arts Kick

The obvious benefit of practice and training.

Your mind is the primary weapon in any defensive situation. Knowing what to do and doing it right is more important than any other consideration. Bringing your entire body into play for defense, including the use of any weapon as an aid, requires a lot of complex actions. You have to know what to do as well as how to do it. Any error or failure to think through these moves can be fatal. Your mind must also be prepared for what you must do. A large part of being prepared requires confidence in yourself, your ability to survive and to win. If there was ever a time when you needed to focus and concentrate all of your energy and ability, this is it. (See Figures 15-1 and 15-2.)



Figure 15-2

Iron Hand Training with a Sandbag

A classic form of exercise and wrist/hand/arm development.

Knowing just what to do is only half the battle. Your body must be capable of carrying it out. Preparation and training are essential. Having the desire to defend yourself is of no practical value if your body is unable to carry it out. The mere possession of a weapon or fighting skill is of equally little value if you lack the spirit and mind-set to do what you have to.

Successful self-defense and the ability to prevail in any type of physical encounter is very much a matter of attitude. The more attitude you have, the more likely you are to win. This attitude is as much a matter of training and conditioning as it is a mental outlook of readiness and preparedness.

Recognizing that the best way to defend yourself is being able to avoid having to do so in the first place, one of the most important considerations is to radiate the type of aura which keeps a potential assailant away to begin with. This entails being able to look mean, serious and prepared. Looking mean has little relationship with actually being mean. It is an acquired art. It takes a bit more practice than just looking in the mirror and snarling. Your whole body language plays an integral part in this. It is easy to sense someone who is afraid.

When I lived and worked in New York City (which typified a big city with rampant crime), attitude was the key to survival. There were always two types of tough guys, the first being those who could win in almost any confrontation and were physically lethal. The second type were those who just looked tough. In fact, they looked so tough that no one ever would actually challenge them. These were the people who could intimidate and bluff their way out of any potential confrontation. Even if they probably couldn't win in a given confrontation, no one wanted to take the chance.

This latter type, when confronted with a mugger brandishing a knife, could simply respond, "You really don't want to die today, do you?" The assailant would often reconsider. What goes through an assailant's mind at this moment is that they are either dealing with a crazy person or someone who is self-confident for good reason.

This big city bravado mental outlook entails certain behavior traits. The first is to never maintain eye contact with strangers. The eyes are very much a window to the soul and often reveal far more than we want them to. What they typically reveal is fear. Displayed fear is a weakness. When you are standing up against another individual who wants to do you harm, the showing of fear will definitely cause them to act on their intentions. When someone is out hunting for a victim, they choose one who appears easy and vulnerable both

physically and psychologically. Looking like you have the fortitude to handle whatever may result is conducive to not being victimized. During any type of confrontation, avoid making eye contact until you have to. The only thing you want your eyes to convey is that you are serious. Serious about doing whatever is necessary about not getting hurt. At times, this may even mean that you are not going to do anything. If you are staring down a gun barrel over the contents of your wallet, doing what is necessary may mean handing it over so that you don't get killed.

Having this tough guy attitude is markedly different from being belligerent or confrontational. There is no advantage in starting something you can't finish. There is no rationale for you to ever do anything which can make a potential confrontation even worse. If you are unable to deter a potential aggressor, then you want to minimize your potential of being hurt. Giving the clear cut impression that you are someone who can and will fight back if necessary will often keep you beyond danger's reach. Most criminals don't like getting hurt either if they can help it. The victim who panics and pleads for mercy is invariably the one who gets hurt the most. A sadistic and aggressive personality likes to take advantage of this weakness. Even if you are petrified, don't give in to it. Begging for your life to someone who is predisposed to taking it will rarely if ever help. It is okay to be petrified of any physical encounter, so long as you don't show it. The feeling of fear under such circumstances is both normal and healthy. No one in their right mind wants to get hurt.

When tough-guy looks aimed toward avoidance and deterrence fail, it is time to get down to the nitty gritty of winning the encounter. You are now committed to doing whatever it takes to survive. There is no backing out or begging for mercy. It is you against your adversary. Your initial determination and motivation will make a world of difference in how this encounter goes.

If a police officer approached a violent and armed criminal and asked him to surrender his weapon, what do you presume would happen? The police officer would most probably be injured. When that same police officer pulls out his gun, drops into a combat crouch stance and shouts at the top of his lungs, "Freeze, motherfucker,

or I'm going to splatter your balls," what is the reaction this time? Yes, theatrics and shock impact have a lot to do with victory.

The moment you bring any weapon into play for your personal defense, you are committed to using it to the best of your ability. Never hesitate or show any hesitation to follow through. The person who pulls out a weapon (any weapon) in defense against an assailant and then hesitates to use it is a fool. Most likely, a soon to be injured if not dead fool.

Never carry a weapon unless you are prepared to use it if the circumstances warrant. Never present a weapon to an adversary unless you are prepared to use it against them. Hollow threats can result in the kind of retribution that nightmares are made of. If you are not willing and able to follow through, you will only make your opponent that much more motivated to want to harm you. Why contribute to an already perilous situation?

Recognizing that every physical confrontation has its own unique set of dynamics, there remain a few common denominators to insure victory.

Whenever possible, get your adversary down on the ground. During any and all confrontations, your efforts are solely directed at doing two things, deflecting attack and inflicting injury on your adversary. In simple terms, you are blocking blows and simultaneously throwing them. Once you have been knocked down, your sole activity changes to getting back up on your feet. Being down on the ground is a very unnatural and vulnerable position from which to defend yourself. With the exception of well trained martial artists or fighters, no one is prepared to fight from a prone position. Getting your adversary down also provides a psychological defeat. Even if that person is able to get back up, he will remain afraid of going down again.

There are basically two types of fighters, and yes, defending yourself is fighting. The first is the kind of individual who is able to view the entire confrontation in a kind of slow motion. Someone who sees everything that is happening and is able to make the appropriate response. These are the natural fighters and the trained professionals. They understand what is happening and know what to do. They are able to calculate each move they will make and both counter

and anticipate what their adversary will do. Such persons are cool, calm and level headed in any physical encounter.

The other type sees any confrontation as going by at lightening speed. Everything is happening too fast for them to adequately plan or respond. Whatever response they make is out of impulse, fear and panic. When feeling threatened or under pressure, this type operates without any thought process whatsoever. This category includes the majority of people. Learning not to show this panic is one thing, overcoming it is another. Fear is the normal reaction to getting hurt. The best that someone like this can hope for is that they do the right thing at the right time without having to think about it. This is the basis for repetitive form and drill training in all martial arts disciplines. You do a certain move or series of moves over and over again so that it becomes second nature to do it. When the time comes that you need to defend yourself, you will instinctively make the right moves. The need for this training applies equally to any of the martial arts as it does to the use of any other weapon. Learning to instinctively draw a gun, take aim and fire requires the same repetitious practice as learning to block a punch. Even taking a pocket knife out of your back pocket and opening it becomes a lot more difficult when under pressure.

In terms of self defense, your hands may not be your only weapon but they certainly are a most important one. It is instinctual for most people to use their hands in a defensive situation. A skilled martial artist knows how to use their entire body as a weapon. The rest of us rely primarily upon our hands.

Having practiced a variety of martial arts, including iron hand training (Fu-Jow Pai Kung Fu), for some time, I have come to hold the highest respect for its practitioners. The mastery of this art requires more perseverance and stamina than most of us (including myself) are willing to exert for a prolonged period. Yes, you can break bricks and punch holes in walls, but at the same time you will be unable to tie your own shoes or dial a telephone. Personally, I like my hands to be more flexible than a slab of meat. Most of the traditional schools of iron hand training focused on the mental and physical conditioning necessary to make your hand into a lethal weapon. This conditioning is accomplished by the gradual hardening and desen-

sitizing of the hand (and developing the focus and concentration to apply it). I have punched a small cotton bag filled with gravel more times than I would like to remember. What initially began as a painful experience turned into an almost gratifying addiction. By the time that my hands started to develop into a formidable weapon, they ceased being good for much else.



Figure 15-3

Alternative Iron Hand Training Exercise

Squeezing a solid rubber handball will help build up phenomenal muscle strength in your hand, fingers, and lower arm.

Strong hands and fingers are essential to almost every kind of defensive situation. Even shooting a handgun requires a strong grip and firm wrist. Punching a sandbag is just one way to build up this strength.

There are certainly easier and more convenient ways to obtain similar results. This is especially so if your objective is to enhance strength, as opposed to punching through walls. One notable method involves exercising with a rubber ball, more specifically, a solid rubber handball. This is a small diameter ball made out of the hardest rubber.



Figure 15-4

Alternative Iron Hand Training Exercise

An alternative and equally effective way of developing hand and lower arm strength without some of the damaging effects of more traditional methods.

It fits perfectly in the center of your hand as well as between the fingers and other assorted grips. Squeezing this ball will help build up phenomenal muscle strength in your hand, fingers and lower arm. The ball will hardly compress as you exert pressure against it. It can be almost addicting to squeeze it whenever and as often as you can. It is one of the few truly portable pieces of exercise equipment. Because the ball fits neatly inside your hand, what you are doing will not be terribly obvious to anyone around you. It is socially acceptable to squeeze a ball in your hand without attracting attention. Without looking like you are up to no good, you can squeeze it in front of you, behind your back and while seated or standing. It is both convenient and versatile. After a few short months of this

effortless activity, you would be surprised at the strength you have developed. You may not be able to break bricks but you will have the kind of grip that no one can get away from. The kind of hands which are capable of launching a powerful punch. The kind of hands that won't be injured by having to punch with them. This is one easy and convenient way of being prepared.



Figure 15-5

Alternative Iron Hand Training Exercise

One of the few training devices which can fit in your pocket.

Conclusion

We all have choices to make. When it comes to personal defense, this choice is an important one. Defending yourself against an assailant and not going to jail because of how you did it is a complex challenge. There are a lot of potential choices depending upon your needs, lifestyle and intentions. Don't take the decision for selecting a weapon too lightly.

YOU WILL ALSO WANT TO READ:

- ☐ **25052 HOMEMADE GUNS AND HOMEMADE AMMO**, by *Ronald B. Brown*. How many "homemade gun" books have you read, only to discover that you need a metal lathe or milling machine? This book will teach you to make guns — and ammunition — with simple hand tools and everyday materials. Step-by-step photographs, drawings and plans. Five simple gunpowder recipes and two simple primer recipes are also included. *1986, 5½ x 8½, 190 pp, illustrated, soft cover. \$14.950.*

- ☐ **19181 EXOTIC WEAPONS, An Access Book**, by *Michael Hoy and Duncan Long*. The long-awaited update of the classic guide to weird weaponry. Ten years in the making, *Exotic Weapon* includes more than 150 photos and illustrations of unusual weapons — with complete information on where you can buy them. Battle Axes, Blowguns, Boomerangs, Flamethrowers, Ray Guns, Saps, Swords, Tear Gas, Whips, the list goes on and on. *1992, 8½ x 11, 147 pp, heavily illustrated, index, soft cover. \$14.95.*

- ☐ **22023 IMPROVISED WEAPONS IN AMERICAN PRISONS**, by *Jack Luger*. Dozens of rare photographs highlight this fascinating book on how weapons are made and used in American prisons. Covers knives, garottes, fire bombs, blunt instruments and guns. Also includes information on how weapons are smuggled into prisons, how they are hidden once inside and how they are used in escapes. *1985, 5½ x 8½, 83 pp, illustrated soft cover. \$8.00.*

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